

THE VICE OF INTEMPERANCE

Increasing in France to an Alarming Extent.

The Statements of a Member of the Medical Profession Showing Its Deadly Strides of Progress Among Workingmen, Women and Children—The Increase in Insanity Attributed to Excessive Drinking.

A BILL for the increased taxation of alcoholic drinks has been before the French Parliament for over a year. In one of the debates in the Chamber of Deputies, Dr. Sannelongue said, as he summed up a long presentation of Government statistics and medical facts concerning the injury to public health worked by the abuse of alcohol:

"In France alcoholism has really existed only for fifty years, and in the world only for a century or two. Looking at the spectacle which alcoholism now presents to us everywhere we have the right to ask—what will become of humanity under such conditions?"

Dr. Léon Labbé, after a long examination of the subject, said in the Senate: "I do not wish to use words for effect, but I am forced to acknowledge that this question concerns the very future of our nation."

The amount of alcohol taxed for human consumption in France has been tripled in ten years. Within 15 years the number of recognized liquor shops has increased by more than 100,000, bringing the total number close up to 500,000 for fewer than 40,000,000 of men, women and children. In the provincial department of the Seine-Inférieure there is one liquor seller to every 67 inhabitants, in the city of Paris there is 1 to 30, in the manufacturing towns of the north 1 to 15. In a single street of Rouen out of 150 houses 75 sell liquor. Within thirty years the average annual consumption of alcohol for each inhabitant of France has increased from a little more than a quart to considerably more than a gallon.

In Rouen, a manufacturing city and frequented port, the annual consumption of alcohol for each inhabitant rises to 44 gallons (more than 10 gallons of brandy at 45 degrees of alcohol strength). A young doctor, wishing to present the subject as a thesis, made personal investigations by serving as a waiter in the workingmen's drinking resorts. The director of the School of Medicine of Rouen has completed his pupil's report by information acquired first hand concerning the drinking habits of the well-to-do classes of the population.

From Saturday evening, when workmen are paid, until Monday evening (not morning) you cannot walk a hundred yards in the workingmen's streets without meeting a drunken man. Monday is taken to wind up the debauch, when the week's wages have not been already spent. A case is cited of one workman who had lost the reckoning of time and staggered back to the factory on Monday. When told what day it was, he at once left work on principle. Little parties are to be met coming home from the resorts in the suburbs—father, mother, children, and friends—staggering along together to the tune of some sentimental song shouted at the top of their voices. They have all been drinking the same liquor—brandy, at six, or even four cents a glass when there is money enough; otherwise the cheaper potato spirits or poisonous bitters and other injurious drinks are used. These can be sold at almost any price, since they cost the seller only a cent for many glasses. They are cheap because they are made of the refuse "heads and tails" from the distilleries of industrial alcohol.

The hardest drinking is done by the iron workers and coal heavers. In a mill employing 150 men the manager knew only five whom he could send safely into the city. Even to these he did not dare intrust any distant commission, as without supervision they would leave their work for drink. In another establishment fifteen men were relatively sober out of 200; none of the others could walk fifty yards along the street without stopping to drink at a liquor shop. One of them never went to his work or left it unless accompanied by his wife.

Dr. Toudot, while at his detective work, saw 150 glasses of bitters sold in ten minutes in a saloon near one of the large factories. He took particular pains to observe the lower class of workmen along the wharves. For this purpose he served in one of their resorts. At the zinc counter there are men in rags drinking. Around the door are women and children, with hungry faces, waiting for the little money that may escape the clutches of the liquor seller. These dock workers earn from 5 to 7 cents an hour. They scarcely pay more than 5 cents a day for food, and for 2 cents they can lodge at "The Sniffling Flea" or some similar inn. All the rest of their money goes for strong drink.

The coal heavers at the docks constitute a higher class of workmen. They earn from \$2 to \$3 a day, and feed themselves well. They do not drink, so to speak, in working hours, contenting themselves with five or six cups of coffee during the day. With each cup they take four cents' worth of brandy (more than two "ponies"). But when night comes they drink up all that is left of their pay, except what the wife has managed to get from them. Often the wives grow tired of this existence and become worse drunkards than the men. After 35 years of age the muscular strength of the coal heaver is gone, and he becomes a common workman along the wharves, paid by the hour and living as he can. As a rule these men are not vicious; you may pass freely among them without fear of insult or violence. The women who drink have a habit of clustering together at the counter, silent, immovable, except as they sway while holding one another upright on their feet.

The unmarried working women are not commonly seen drunk; but they are nearly all the victims of a slow daily intoxication. This is also the case with the married woman who goes out to

work. They leave home at 6 o'clock in the morning and return at 6 in the evening. The children are put at the public crèche. The food of the women is bought already cooked. For their chief meal they will spend 5 cents for something to eat—bread, herrings, sausages, fried things—and 10 cents for coffee and brandy. In all the families coffee is drunk to excess and never without brandy. Young girls in the hospital, when the brandy is refused, prefer not to take the coffee. It is the pride of parents to make their young children "eat as we do," from their first year of life. This means coffee morning and noon, and after they are 5 years old, coffee with brandy. One of the hospital physicians, Mr. Bernadotte, has made a list at the Tuesday consultations of the habitual coffee drinkers among fifty children from a few weeks to 7 years of age. Two began drinking before they were one month old; four when three months old; two when 5, five at 8 one at 10, five at 12, and 20 months; fifteen at 1 year, and nineteen when 3 years old.

A school teacher tried to complete these statistics among his pupils. Out of sixty-three children between 6 and 9 years of age, twenty-four declared that they had brandy to drink every day. From his own observation the school teacher estimates at 40 per cent. the proportion of young children that drink brandy after each meal. By the time they are 10 they already have an imperious habit of constantly drinking coffee with brandy, a habit which is helped along by the use of tobacco. In three girls' schools, the proportion of children who drank with their parents coffee and brandy, with other alcoholic drinks, was 75 per cent. At the crèches the mothers, when leaving their children for the day, give them a bottle of coffee already mixed with brandy. On Sunday and Monday mornings early, the children are sent to the liquor shop for cider and brandy. On their way home they may be seen lingering, to sample the liquor from the bottle.

Among women that work about the house the habit of drinking is equally strong; and the fact that the French law allows liquor to be sold without any special license helps this. Washerwomen, charwomen, cooks and maids of all work have the inevitable coffee and brandy in the house. Outside, every shopkeeper that tries to draw their customer and marketman, coal dealer and even the seller of chestnuts—sells the "little glass" cheap along with provisions. If the cook or the maid has her morning's purchases at three different shops she will drink at least three glasses before returning home. The result may not be drunkenness, but it is a continual alcoholic intoxication.

Laborers in the country parts of Normandy are not behind the city workmen in brandy drinking. The traditional cider now counts for no more than water. Men from twenty-five to fifty years of age earn more than a dollar a day, working from 6 o'clock in the morning to 8 in the evening, with five meals in the mean time. Each day the workman will drink at least eight quarts of cider and six glasses of brandy, and they will not be liquor glasses. Sunday he passes at the liquor shop of the village, and by 6 in the evening you find men dead drunk scattered along the side of the road leading towards the farms. Three times a week, on market days, the farmer himself goes to the village inn while his men are selling the cattle or farm produce. There he drinks from twenty to forty cups of coffee with his cronies. As the real coffee disappears the cup is filled up with brandy under the different names known to these Norman drinkers—pousse café, vinicette, surricette, consolation, gloria. In one of these farming towns of 2,000 inhabitants there are twenty-eight cafés, and as many more simple liquor shops.

In some places the field laborers have an allowance each day of one litre—more than an American quart—of cider-brandy. They drink it a large tumblerful at a time. In some of the provincial towns the women are notoriously as hard drinkers as the men. When they go out of the house they carry a bottle in their pocket. Young or old, if they have to buy two cents' worth of salt at the grocer's they profit by the occasion to drink a glass of brandy. The families have many children, 8, 10, and 12, but two-thirds of them die. The Sisters of Charity try to gather together the girls, giving them food and clothes. But the mothers will sell for 10 cents, with which to drink, garments that cost 60 or 80 cents. One woman, during her husband's absence, took the wool from the mattresses of the beds and sold it for drink, stuffing in hay instead. The morning breakfast of families is bread, which father, mother and children dip in a great glass of brandy among them.

So far there has been question only of persons laboring for day's wages. Among these, in both city and country, the worst sign is the rapid increase of drunkenness among women. In the country the work in the open air renders the evil less apparent.

Among the middle classes Dr. Brunon bears witness to the sobriety of many small proprietors. But he insists that they are in the minority. In the lower middle classes, the café and restaurant proprietors and the grocers, nearly all of whom are liquor sellers, are all practically alcoholics. The waiters, however large and strong, never hold out more than a few months in the same shop. The confined air and overwork in the midst of the fumes of impure alcohol drive most of them into rapid consumption.

In the better café the proprietor is obliged to make himself the crony of his regular customers and to drink with them. His is almost invariably a victim of this duty, after the fashion of the rich

alcoholic; he becomes obese, has liver troubles, tremblings, sweats, diabetes. The commercial travellers of liquor houses have the worst lot. Their business has to be transacted at the café, or liquor shop, and they must treat and drink with their intended customer. One declared that he is obliged to take never fewer than thirty or forty drinks daily.

Among bookkeepers and the higher class of shop clerks the drinking habits are the same as those of the well-to-do middle class people. They are the persons who sit around the café tables in the open air and give foreigners a high idea of French moderation in drink. Before luncheon and dinner they linger over their absinthe or bitters. They show no signs of drunkenness; they are too sensitive to ridicule. But their hands tremble prematurely and the insane asylums tell the story. In Paris the consumption of absinthe in 1885 was 1,525,106 gallons; in 1892 it had risen to 3,425,700 gallons. The cases of insanity due to alcohol had risen meanwhile from 12 to 35 per cent.

THE CURSE OF THE POOR.

(By Rev. R. F. Clarke, S. J., in North American Review.)

I believe the experience of everyone who lives and has lived among the poor, whether it be Catholic priest or Protestant clergyman, Sister of Charity or district visitor, charity organization agent or Brother of St. Vincent de Paul, will bear me out in my conviction that nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the actual destitution among the poor is to be traced, directly or indirectly, to habits of drink. It is not, as a general rule, the drunkard himself who has to pay the heaviest penalty, at least in this world, for his intemperance. It is too often the helpless wife and the neglected children who have to bear the burden of the father's sin. There is scarcely a city or a town in the whole world, from which all subject poverty would not practically disappear if the vice of drunkenness could be banished. Of course there are, besides, a number of instances of destitution in no way connected with drink. The sudden death or long illness of the breadwinner of the family will, from time to time, cause a very acute phase of misery and want. The poor helpless mother, with her hungry brood, is as sad a sight as well can be. But such cases are exceptional, and men do not legislate for exceptions. Such needs can easily be met and are met in every well organized community, by Christian charity. They are also of their very nature only temporary. Even the poor widow left destitute with half a dozen little ones, if she is at all deserving, is sure to find friends and obtain employment. The pinch of poverty may be severe for a time, but in our complex civilization there is work for all who have willing hands and an honest heart. Add to this that the advance of habits of thrift, the increased facilities for insurance, and the growing sense of the duty of providing for such contingencies make the occurrence of acute cases of unforeseen distress tend continually to diminish. There is another point that is worth considering. Does a large family tend in the long run to greater poverty? It may be for the first few years after marriage. But this is not, as a rule, the time when the pinch is felt. Both father and mother are in the prime of their health and strength, and the difficulty of finding sufficient means of support is, in the case of the industrious sober, exceedingly rare. It is usually in later life that the pinch comes, if it comes at all. It is when middle age, or a life of hard labor, or some unforeseen sickness or accident, brings with it a lessened energy, and the need of more generous living. It is when the hair begins to grow gray, and the once upright form is bowed by advancing years, that hunger and poverty are most to be dreaded.

AMERICAN INVENTIONS.

The following list of American patents, granted to Canadian inventors on the 5th instant, is reported expressly for this paper by Messrs. Marion & Laberge, International Patent Solicitors, 185 St. James street, Montreal.

- 567,122—William E. Borbridge, Ottawa, locomotive exhaust pipe
- 567,536—Edward Dickson, Oak Lake, Gunpowder
- 567,566—Isaac Fréchette, Montreal, lasting machine
- 567,468—Charles A. Gregory, Montreal, picking rod
- 567,145—Peter C. Larkin, Toronto, packing rod
- 567,146—Joseph E. Lockwood, Brighton, a combination lock
- 567,153—J. Larsen, Toronto, machine for manufacturing veneers
- 567,194—Philip Newton, Grand Harbor, fork
- 567,570—Oliver T. Springer, Burlington, sliding on folding door
- 567,177—John W. Waddell, Hamilton, game board.

CONVERSATIONAL SLOVENLINESS.

Conversation also is often marked by moral slovenliness. Not only is there that kind of talk stained with dirt which some men shamelessly exhibit, but there are the conversations in which there is a covert looseness, a doubtfulness of meaning, a hint of that which may not be said with mainly straightforwardness, which has in it a certain laxity, as far as moral rectitude is concerned. There is that ready knowledge of everybody's misdeeds, as of their humbler relations, which people dispense, some with glittering mischief in their eyes, others with condoning demureness—"so dreadful, you know"—only it happens that they do not know and are only retailing a lie which they have procured from some dealer in that infamous article, hinting away a man's or woman's character and proving that they have none of their own.—Good Words.

ABOUT EYEGLASSES.

If you are so unfortunate as to be compelled to wear eyeglasses or spectacles, see that they fit not only as regards the glasses, but the frames. There is nothing uglier than the marks of ill fitting glasses on either side of the nose. An

optician who understands his business measures the bridge of the nose, the distance of the eyes from it and the width of the temples, and bends or fits the glasses accordingly. Apart from the discomfort and disfigurement of badly fitting frames, it is hardly possible that the glasses which they hold are right. They are almost certain to be out of focus. In choosing glasses, although the oculist or optician is bound to provide you with what is right, much depends upon yourself, for he cannot see with your eyes. The great mistake of those not accustomed to lenses is to get them too strong. It is such a pleasure for the moment to see things clearly that they exclaim: "Oh, yes, that's just right," whereas the proper glass would be one of considerably less power.—Brooklyn Eagle.

DANGER OF FATIGUE.

IT GENERATES A POISON IN THE SYSTEM THAT IS DEADLY IN ITS NATURE.

"He never loses a moment," used to be thought an unqualified compliment. Now we are not quite so sure that it says much for the wisdom of him to whom it is applied. From many different directions comes the testimony that too much activity is less instead of gain since overfatigue poisons the physical system.

An analysis has been made of the poison engendered by fatigue, and it has been found to be similar to the ancient vegetable poison, curari, into which the Indians used to dip their arrows, and a most deadly poison it was. The poison of fatigue is of the same chemical nature and is as truly deadly if it is created more rapidly than the blood can carry it off. There is no known antidote for this poison, and its dangers beset alike the pleasure seeker and the worker.

An Italian physician recently examined 24 bicycle riders after they had ridden 32 miles in 2 1/2 hours. It was found that in nearly every instance the nervous system

was so far affected by fatigue that the hearing of the cyclists was defective. After a rest of two hours most of them could hear as well as ever.

Another practical test was made upon 50 grammar school children who were to take part in a written examination of 2 1/2 hours. Before entering upon the strain which such an examination must necessarily be each child was instructed to lift as much as he could with the dynamometer. This was done to test the muscular strength of each pupil before the examination.

After the work in the schoolroom was ended the children were again told to lift as much as possible in the same way. It was found that, with one or two exceptions, they could not lift as much by several pounds as they had lifted before the examination.

It is now a demonstrated fact that prolonged mental strain will diminish the pulse, produce fullness and heaviness of the head and bring about palpitation of the heart.—Youth's Companion.

FUNERAL OF MRS. BUCKLAND.

The funeral of the late Mrs. Buckland took place on Saturday morning, from the Home Hospital on University street. On the coffin were several beautiful floral tributes. Arrival at St. Patrick's Church there was a requiem mass chanted by the Rev. Father Lucy, assisted by Rev. Father McCallen. Among those who followed the remains to their last resting place were Acting Chief Justice Tait, Mr. Justice Wurtelle, Messrs. Robert Reid, J. H. Joseph, Robert Hall, Dr. O'Connor, Henry Hogan, R. K. Thomas, A. D. Fraser, R. M. Edsall and Geo. W. Stephens.

"Mamma, what part of the body is the trombone?"

"No part of the body, my dear." "Yes, it is, because it says in the paper here that last night while returning from the symphony concert, Professor Gridel fell and broke his trombone."

A SHAMROCK'S MISSION.

BY KATHERINE CROWLEY IN PITTSBURG CATHOLIC.

"NO; I CANNOT bear it much longer. I shall lose my reason soon—it has been a great mistake, a mistake that is, alas, ir retrievable."

"Not exactly ir retrievable," a masculine voice broke in, "there is a way out of the bondage, you know—that is, of course, provided that you keep silent and let things go," he added.

"A way? No," the girl answered half pitying. "There is no way except death, and that," she shuddered, "is denied me. Were not the words 'I'll death doth part.' How, then, can there be a way?" The truth seemed suddenly to flash across her brain, and in a low, terror-stricken voice she asked: "You did not mean—?" and she almost breathed rather than spoke, "divorce. Tell me, Frank, surely you have not lost all sense of shame. That is not what you meant?" Her voice died away almost in an entreaty and she waited for the denial that would surely come.

"Well," Frank answered, in a voice of perfect indifference, "there would be no harm in that. Of course, I could not obtain it anyway except for desertion. You are blameless. I am—well, the least said about me the better; it has been a total mistake from the beginning. Religion's a curse, anyway."

"Religion is a blessing. Thank God that was one thing left to console me for a broken idol, an idol that has given me a chance now of obtaining a divorce. You at least are safe enough, for you know that I would cut off my right hand sooner than do as you suggest; but, as there has been a question like that brought up, there must be a reason behind. There must be some one who could make your life an ideal one."

"Perhaps so," came the quite cynical answer, and then there was a silence, broken in a few moments by Frank. He got up from his chair and as he left the room he turned round to say: "I am tired of this cat-and-dog life. The sooner you return to your home and your idolatry the better" and with that he went out. Presently the bang of the street door gave notice that he was gone, to return, maybe, in the early morning, maybe never.

Nora stood by the window. No one would recognize in the careworn face the once pretty Nora Darrell, and yet it seemed five years instead of a few months since she had come to join her husband in an American home. Bright, witty, and with the startling beauty peculiar to the south of Ireland, the daughter of St. Patrick had created for a time a pleasing sensation. She was blind and happy, but after a month or so things seemed to dawn upon her that Frank was not the Frank who had wooed and won her girlish heart in that far away Irish home, despite the protestations of the dear old parish priest who had known her from when she was a tiny tot.

Frank Austin was a Protestant who stayed for some time in Ireland visiting a few miles from the home where Nora Darrell lived with her widowed invalid mother. He was handsome, bright, just the sort of a man to capture a girl's heart. Before he returned to America they were married. He was obliged to go sooner than expected and Nora stayed behind, for her mother's life was doimed, and when, after two months' separation from her husband, Nora left for the great American city, New York, she left behind her only a mound lying in the quiet little cemetery at the foot of the hill, and the last glimpse of Ireland was gone.

How lonely she felt, but how glad she would be to go back—not to the dear little village where she had spent a happy girlhood—but to one of the big cities where she could earn her bread in peace. Why should she not go? Plainly, Frank did not want her. He had told her so.

She was impetuous, high-spirited, and, as she sat by the window, she laid her plans for the future, in which her hus-

band did not share. That night Frank did not return home, and it was not until a week later that he put in an appearance, only to find Nora gone, leaving no trace—not even a letter.

Perhaps he was not entirely bad. He searched for many weary years, and the social world knew him no more. He had received one letter, the postmark being Queenstown. Nora simply said they were better apart, and that he could not marry, for she knew he had not meant what he said about the divorce, and that she would send him a token each year that she was still living. So every year on St. Patrick's Day the lonely man, wrapped up in remorse, received from Ireland a spray of shamrock. He longed for the year to go by that the 17th of March might come round again. Never a line came with it, just a simple reminder. Twice he crossed the ocean to Ireland and tried to trace her. The old parish priest did not know of her whereabouts, and so twenty-five years passed away, and Nora did not know what wonders her little remembrance had wrought in the heart and soul of one who was bound to her "till death doth part," for not more than five years after she had returned to Ireland Frank Austin was received into the Church and had for years been a prominent member of St. —parish and the staunch friend of its pastor, Rev. Father Johns.

He had plenty, and yet Nora was somewhere in the world toiling, perhaps, for a living, pretty dark-eyed Nora. His vocation was a doctor, which he had taken up ten years after she left him, taken up mainly to give comfort, hope, to others more wretched.

He knew she was not dead, for each year had brought its remembrance. Certainly the address had not been Nora's writing, but that signified nothing. Some one else might easily do that for her.

Nobody, to observe the fine-looking man, despite the gray beard, bending over the cot of a sufferer in the poverty-stricken district of the metropolis, could ever associate that tenderness, that nobility, with the Frank Austin of years before. Drink had changed his nature and warped his boyish grain at that time. He never thought any atonement, any humiliation, was great enough to stamp out the cruelty of that short married period.

He had just returned one Sunday from early Mass, when he found a note awaiting him to call on a patient at the other end almost of the city. It was quite 4 o'clock when he returned again to his lonely mansion, and much to his surprise he found Father Johns sitting comfortably reading in his library.

"I suppose you are quite astonished to find me out at this hour on a Sunday, but I have just received a telegram that summons me to Boston. I shall be gone until Thursday. I have a guest, a young priest, coming over on a liner that arrives on Wednesday, and I knew you would be hospitable and meet him for me. He is coming out for mission work. In fact" here his voice grows soft, "he means to go south to the fever-stricken district. I know the object is a beautiful one, but he is but a boy, only a few months ordained, and, strange to relate, his name is yours, Frank A. Dineen," he says, consulting a letter in his hand. "I have a friend in Ireland who has taken a great interest in the young priest, and so he wrote me to try and persuade him not to go further south. I shall not do that," said Father Johns, emphatically. "I only wish God had ordained that I should accompany him, but," with a dreamy look, "He, the wise Master, knows what is best."

Before the priest left, Dr. Frank promised that he would certainly meet his guest and try and make up for Father Johns' absence—so they parted.

CONCLUDED ON PAGE SEVEN.

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