

powerful argument, both in the way of warning and of persuasion, against the use of alcoholic stimulants.

Says an eminent English physician, Norman Kerr, M.D., F.L.S.: "The heredity of alcohol is now beyond dispute. It is no mere dream of an abstemious enthusiast, but the operation of a natural law." We are indebted to his valuable treatise on "The Heredity of Alcohol," and to that of Nathan Allen, M.D., on "The Effects of Alcohol on Offspring," for most of the facts given below. They cannot fail to sadden the heart and increase our horror of an evil that *poisons the very life-blood of the race*, as well as swallows up annually billions of dollars, and fills all lands with want and vice and crime in every revolting form.

**Physical Diseases**, caused by "habitual intemperance, are often transmitted," says Dr. Kerr. He specifies various diseases and actual cases which came under his own treatment, as, for instance, alcoholic phthisis, a "disease frequently imprinted on the constitution of the unborn babe; hereditary alcoholic rheumatism and gout are constantly to be met with: in no other disease is the heredity of alcohol more marked"; in Britain the proofs are everywhere. Alcoholic cirrhosis, and alcoholic contracted kidney, are very common and pronounced. The blood of the inebriate parent is so vitiated and his energies are so wasted, that, even when there is a temperate mother, the innocent children are often puny, stunted and debilitated.

**Alcoholic, nervous and mental diseases.** Epilepsy is by no means uncommon. Defective nerve-power, an enfeebled will, and a debilitated *morale*, are a frequent legacy of inebriates to their helpless issue. In one family with a drunken father, two girls were hysterical, and the third imbecile; of the sons, the eldest was an epileptic, the second died of alcoholic apoplexy, and the third was an idiot. Dementia or idiocy follows often of necessity from parental excess in drink. Dr. Howe, in his well-known Report on the State

of Idiocy in Massachusetts, states that the habits of one or both parents of 300 idiots having been learned, 145 of these children, or nearly one-half, were found to be the progeny of habitual drunkards. He gives the case of one drunkard who was the parent of seven idiots! Dr. Mitchel, in his testimony before the Committee of the British House of Commons, said he was quite certain that the children of habitual drunkards were in larger proportion idiotic than other children—a belief shared in by M. Rousel, M. Taquet, Dr. Richardson, and a host of competent observers. At the recent meeting of the British Medical Association, Dr. Beach, Medical Superintendent of the Darenth Asylum, reported that "an analysis of 430 cases under his own care showed 31.6 per cent. of idiotic children to be the offspring of intemperate parents. In private practice the proof of the influence of parental excess in the generation of amentia are continually confronting me; and among my professional *confères* there is no difference of opinion of the subject." Says the same author:

"There can be no reasonable doubt that not the least painful and unavoidable effects of intemperance in alcohol are the physical and mental debility and disease it entails on posterity. Darwin, in 'The Botanic Garden,' pointed out this fixed and immutable law. Nearly all the diseases springing from indulgence in distilled and fermented liquors are liable to become hereditary, and to descend to at least three or four generations, unless the hereditary tendency be starved out by uncompromising and persistent abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. This is no speculative theory, no visionary hypothesis. It is a well-grounded belief founded on accurate observation—a legitimate conclusion deduced from extended experience, and based on incontrovertible facts. But the most distressing aspect of the heredity of alcohol is that the transmitted narcotic and insatiable craving for drink—the dipsomania of the physician—is every day becoming more and more prevalent. Probably this alarming increase in the alcoholic heredity in England is owing, in great part, to the unmistakable increase of female intemperance among us."

"The inherited drink-crave, where it exists, even when from the absence of temptation or from the strength of resolute will it has never been made manifest, is always latent, and ever ready to be lit up at the faintest alcoholic prov-