

## Mr. Carrick and Prohibition---Another Reply

Mr. A. Carrick's article in the April B. C. M., was evidently written with the intention of convincing your readers that where prohibition is in effect, there is corresponding increase in the use of narcotic drugs.

The first page is devoted to establishing that "what is one man's meat is another man's poison." Whether or not he has established his point must be left to your readers. One thing is certain, many nations resort to the "poison;" Norway and Sweden in the early part of the 19th century resorted to the use of brandy, with a corresponding debauching of the people. France was not satisfied with light wines and absinthe has become the almost universal beverage.

The statement that, "some of the races of Eastern Europe and many of the Asiatic races use opium freely, yet they suffer no harm from its use, nor do they experience any depression when deprived of the drug," is not borne out in fact. An Asiatic who is addicted to opium and is deprived of it, suffers just as do others. Witness the wreckage among the Chinese in Vancouver city who are opium addicts.

The crux of the matter is dealt with in the last quarter page, wherein Mr. Carrick would have your readers believe that prohibition is responsible for an increase in the drug habit, and lays the accusation that we prohibitionists "ostrich-like" are burying our heads in the sand.

We have frequently heard it said, "there is just as much liquor consumed as ever" and "you can buy booze any place in Vancouver."

Now we are told "because of the lack of liquor, people resort to drugs." Both of these statements cannot be true. Which horn of the dilemma is Mr. Carrick on?

We are assured by Mr. Carrick, at the end of his article that "we are worse off than before," a mere statement without even an attempt at proof.

Permit me to call the attention of your readers to the following: The Provincial jail at New Westminster is being converted into a high school, while the Wilkenson road jail at Victoria is now a mental hospital. The provincial jail at Kamloops has been closed, so far as prisoners are concerned. From the Dominion statistics we learn that the arrests in B.C. for drunk and disorderly conduct in 1918 as compared with 1917 fell off 91 per cent. That does not support "we are worse off than before."

In regard to the drug habit, in August 1919 a Questionnaire was sent to every druggist in B.C., the 1st and 4th questions in which were as follows:

- (1). Do you find in your business an increased demand for narcotic drugs within the last two years?
- (4). Do you consider the use of narcotic drugs more widely spread than prior to the incoming of prohibition?

Without an exception, the answers were, there was no increased demand for narcotic drugs, hence, any increase in the habit must be from illegal sources.

Let me quote the words of some prominent men, and in stance conditions to establish the fact that the illegal traffic in narcotics is world wide.

Dr. Scelesh, who has been superintendent for eighteen years of the Chicago House of Correction, emphatically states, "prohibition means less drug fiends. A woman addicted to the use of alcohol is much more apt to become addicted to drugs than a sober woman."

Dr. Raymond F. S. Kieb, Medical Superintendent of Matteawan State Hospital, New York, who is an eminent authority on drug addiction, says, "I am convinced that the statements the liquor interests include in their propaganda to the effect that drug-addiction increases enormously when dry laws

go into a community, are much over-estimated. I have seen no substantiation of this statement and very much doubt its authenticity."

The words of one of our medical men in Vancouver may be quite correct, "prohibition reveals those addicted to narcotics, but does not create them." It appears there are those who between the times they were using morphine or cocaine, would take a shot of whiskey or other liquor, now are driven to take the narcotic more frequently.

In the Vancouver "Sun" of April 28th, the following item appeared: "Winnipeg, April 27th. In a desperate attempt to cure themselves of the morphine habit, two returned soldiers, about 30 years old, walked into the Provincial police court clerk's office today and begged to be sent to jail for six weeks each. The request was granted and the clerk made out the necessary papers. The men acted as their own policemen and walked to the jail unescorted. They explained that the habit was first formed in the trenches when they began to take morphine to steady their nerves." Our sympathies go out to those who become addicts when under severe nervous strain, or when undergoing various operations, and no doubt many like the two quoted, become habitues under these circumstances.

On the other hand, Chief of Police McRae is reported as having said, "during the war the traffic lessened considerably in Vancouver, owing, no doubt, to the enlistment or conscription of many drug addicts. With the ending of the war, these are now again here and the traffic has grown to satisfy their craving. The conditions of reconstruction have aided the insidious progress of the sale of narcotics."

It is worthy of note that in New York, the increase in the drug habit became so pronounced that it was called the "Manhattan disease" years before prohibition came into effect.

In this connection, Royal S. Copeland, Health commissioner for the U. S., who recently closed his drug clinic, which was appointed just before prohibition went into effect in an effort to care for the drug addicts that were roaming around New York, stated that "the States imported 15 times as much opium per capita as any other nation, and 90 per cent. of this was sold illegally." Commissioner Copeland goes on to say, "there are not enough addicts now to keep the place open."

From reports in the Press we learn that juveniles are becoming addicted to the use of these drugs, through the wily vendors. Were liquor sold in bar-rooms or Government stores, these juveniles could not legally be served, hence prohibition is not the reason why juveniles are becoming drug fiends.

From all these sources it is evident that any increase in the illicit sale of narcotics is not due to the prohibition of the sale of liquor, but is an aftermath of a world wide war, and is not restricted to any country or nation.

Prohibitionists have not "buried their heads in the sand," nor are they "hidden in the clouds." They are facing the problems of life, seeking for a solution that will enable their fellow men to live at their best, and to do so, are untiring in their efforts to remove anything that degrades or demoralizes the human race.

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