

and Sunday morning, a fact which speaks for itself.

In 1903-4 the mean annual number of deaths of children in London from overlaying was 612. The large majority of cases occurred on Saturday and Sunday nights.

The Influence of Heredity upon Inebriety.

The question is sometimes debated as to how far the tendency to inebriety is inherited. Proof is wanting as regards the existence of a distinct inebriate diathesis which is handed on and cannot be resisted, and by means of which the drinker suffers early elimination from the race. On the other hand, careful scientific investigation shows that the children of inebriates inherit a faulty organization and an impaired type of nervous system, which often leads to their also falling victims to the "craving" for alcohol, especially when surrounding social and industrial conditions encourage indulgence in its use.

In order to elucidate the influence of heredity as a direct or indirect cause of inebriety, a prolonged investigation, lasting thirteen years, was undertaken by a committee of doctors in America, the results of which have not yet received full publication. In a preliminary statement, Dr. Crothers, their chairman, reports that the histories of 1,744 cases of inebriety have been obtained, which may be classified as follows:

Distinct history of heredity.....	1,080
Disease, injury, shocks, strains and infection	390
Starvation and poisoning	180
Exposure, ignorance, mental contagion	85
Causes too complex for classification	9

He says:

The heredity of inebriety is established from such studies beyond all possible question and doubt. The central conclusion, which cannot be stated too strongly, is: that the injury from alcohol to the cell and nervous tissue is transmitted to the next generation with absolute certainty in some form or other. It may not always appear in the drink and drug symptoms, but the injury

breaks out again in some neurotic trouble, defect, or predisposition.

Part of the tragedy which surrounds this question of heredity is due to the fact that some children inherit from parents accustomed to moderate drinking a food craze and abnormal hunger which never seems to be satisfied. This early provokes dyspepsia and inebriety.

Another class is born with a precocious sexual instinct, which seeks gratification apparently without limit or control.

Often there appears to be a passing over of inherited predispositions from one to a third or fourth generation, the descendants being liable to instability and lack of will-power, and to "invalidism" of all grades and types; persons, namely, whose lives are a perpetual struggle against some bodily or nervous difficulty.

Whether the actual taste for alcohol is ever inherited is at present a somewhat open question; but in face of the fact that so many other "cravings" haunt the life of the descendant of alcoholic parents, it seems not unlikely that he should possess a sense of "need" for the sedative effect of the drug.

Special Inheritance of Nervous Instability.

As pointed out by Dr. Clouston, there are, unfortunately, in the British Isles thousands of persons who have inherited from alcoholic parents an impaired type of nervous system which makes its owner more susceptible to the action of alcohol than would be a normal person.

These persons possess but feeble brains and their will-power is below normal; for them, therefore, any alcoholic drink is liable to be a dire mistake, since it may arouse a "craving" which has so far lain dormant, but which when once awakened, cannot be controlled by the feeble will-power at their command. Many of these persons drink because they simply have no will-power to abstain.

Conclusion.

That alcohol affects disastrously the minds and bodies of innocent unborn children must be the undoubted conclusion of those who weigh the evidence of this chapter; and the question