

Prof. S. M. D. Fay, after giving an appalling account of the drunkenness which he saw in London, where, he says, "there is every opportunity to cure drunkenness with many and cheap drinks," adds:—"The fact of the matter is, if we want to multiply diseases, poverty, crime, indolence, and all the stages of idiocy and drunkenness, and the consumption of the stronger drinks, introduce more mild drinks, and make them cheap, and they will make the rest."

The history of the beer law in England corroborates the most radical statements that can be made on this subject. You are aware that in 1830 the use of ardent spirits, especially gin, had become so alarming in the Mother Country, that it became necessary in the estimation of all good citizens, that something should be done to check the evil. What to do was a very serious question, but it was finally determined to pass a law entitled, "An Act to permit the general sale of beer and cider by retail in England." By this Act many householders could on giving bonds and sureties, and paying two guineas, obtain a license to sell beer, and on the payment of one guinea obtain a license to sell cider. The object sought in passing this bill was to wean the people from spirit drinking by cheapening beer and making it easy to obtain it. One who favored the bill said he supported it because "it would supply the laboring classes with a more wholesome beverage than they now enjoyed, and preserve their morals from contamination." He believed that the grogshops would tend to keep the lower orders from the public houses, and thereby promote both morality and comfort." Lord Somerset said this bill "would substitute good beer for the abominable adulterations." Lord Brougham in supporting the bill said, "it was giving the people what, under present circumstances, might be called a moral species of beverage." The Duke of Wellington, in moving the second reading, "was sure the measure would be attended with the most beneficial consequences to the lower orders." The Chancellor of the Exchequer argued, "The measure would at once conduce to the comfort of the people in affording them cheap and ready accommodations, to their health, in procuring them a better and more wholesome beverage; and to their morality, in removing them from the temptations to be met with in a common ale house, and introducing them to houses of a better order."

Thus defended in both Houses of Parliament, and having the support of the leading philanthropists and statesmen of that day, the bill became a law; and it is said that the Duke of Wellington was heard to say that he regarded the passage of the law as "a greater achievement than any of his military victories." Astonishing results speedily followed. The friends of the measure were surprised by the sudden and general demoralization. The Rev. Sidney Smith who had expected and predicted great and beneficial results, wrote, only two weeks after the Act took effect: "The new Beer Bill has begun its operations. *Everybody is drunk.* Those who are not singing are sprawling. The sovereign people are in a heastly state." The demoralization was so general and continuous, that the Duke of Wellington and Lord Brougham confessed to a change of opinion before a year had elapsed. Subsequently the latter said, in the House of Lords, "To what good was it that the legislature should pass laws to punish crime, or that their lordships should occupy themselves in finding out modes of improving the morals of the people by giving them education? What could be the use of sowing a little seed here and plucking up a weed there, if these beer-shops were to be continued that they might go on to sow the seeds of immorality broadcast over the land, germinating the most frightful produce that ever had been allowed to grow up in a civilized country, and, he was ashamed to add, under the fostering care of Parliament, and throwing its baleful influences over the whole community."

Lord Francis Edgerton "considered the bill as promotive of enormous evils. No bill had ever been more productive of drunkenness and immorality than this." Mr. Sadler said that "from his own knowledge he could declare that these beer-shops had made many, who were *previously sober and industrious, now drunkards*; and many mothers had also become tipplers." Magistrates, prison-keepers and their chaplains, gave uniform testimony, as the operation of the law progressed, to its frightfully debasing results.

G. F. Drury, Esq., magistrate, Shotover Park, Oxon, says:

"The Beer Bill has done more to brutalize the English laborer, and take him from his family and fireside into the worst associations, than almost any measure that could have been devised. It has furnished victims for the gaols, the hulks, and the gallows, and has frightfully extended the evils of pauperism and moral debasement."

The Reverend Chancellor Raikes said at a public meeting:

"He had seen its (the Beer-shop Act) effects spreading like a blight all through the country; villages which formerly were like the creations of romance—so beautiful were they—had become the scene of every evil."

Archdeacon Garbutt says:

"A large experience tells me that, where a neighborhood is visited by this scourge (beer-shops), no organization, no zeal, no piety, however devoted, no personal labors, however apostolic, will avail to effect any solid amelioration."

The appointment of Committees by Parliament to investigate the workings of the law, resulted uniformly in the accumulation of testimony against it. A committee appointed in 1853, said, in their Report to the House of Commons:

"The beer-shop system has proved a failure," and concurred in the statement of

the Lords' report on the Beer Act of 1830, that "it was already sufficiently notorious that drunkenness is the main cause of crime, disorder, and distress in England, and it appears that the multiplication of houses for the consumption of intoxicating liquors, which, under this Act, has risen from 8,830 to 123,306, has been thus in itself an evil of the first magnitude."

The press, which had been clamorous in its demand for the passage of the bill as an act of justice to the common people, testified soon after its trial, to the same effect as the magistrates, clergy and committees. The *Globe* thus represents the sentiments of the press generally:

"The injury done by the Beer Act to the peace and order of the rural neighborhoods, not to mention domestic happiness, industry, and economy, has been proved by witnesses from every class of society to have exceeded the evils of any single act of internal administration passed within the memory of man."

What a confirmation all this is of the more recent testimony of England's greatest brewer, Mr. Buxton: "The struggle of the school, the library, and the church, all united against the beer-houses and the gin-palaces, is but one development of the war between heaven and hell."

It is the same in all countries. You will be told by the advocates of beer-drinking that Germany is a strictly temperance country, and that beer is a harmless drink there. Do not be deceived by interested witnesses. A gentleman writing from Berlin to *Scribner's Monthly* thus speaks of beer-drinking in the German capital:

"If the school of social philosophers who argue so pleasantly about the influence of beer and wine in making a people temperate will visit a few of the most notorious of the beer and wine cellars of the German metropolis, we will guarantee a change of front in their position in regard to this momentous question. The curse of Berlin is its ten thousand beer and wine cellars, hidden away in subterranean retreats, where security from the public gaze is an inducement to a visit on the part of those who would hesitate to enter them if open to general view. Many of these are the retreats of the lowest species of vice and degradation, and the resorts of criminals in all stages of depravity. The uninitiated would neither find nor suspect the existence of half of them, and he who would study the subject worthily needs a trusty policeman as guide and protector."

Then, alluding to the police supervision which is so strict as to exclude drunkenness from the "public view," and so inclining superficial tourists to the conclusion that there is no drunkenness in Germany, the writer adds:

"But a night among the low haunts of any city will show how deceptive is this opinion, and prove, to the sorrow of the philanthropist, that it is a delusion. Indeed, we need little more to convince us of this fact than the wail which is arising in various parts of Europe as to the fearful ravages now being made on society by the excessive use of beer, wine, and alcoholic liquors."

In a volume published by the State Department of the United States Government, embodying a series of Consular reports concerning the state of labor in Europe, we have this testimony:

From the Consular at Barmen, Germany:

"A fruitful cause of want and ruin among the laboring classes is the enormous increase of the drinking-saloons and dancing-halls, and the complaints are universal as to the disposition of the laborers to indulge in excessive drink."

From Saxony:

"The poorer classes of the southern part fare very meanly indeed. For homes they have generally a single room, which answers for workshop as well. . . . When Sunday or a holiday comes they meet together at a restaurant, smoke poor tobacco, drink 'Einfach' beer, talk, sing, and dance, and are as happy as if they had a thousand a year."

From Dresden:

"The cost of living to the laboring classes almost invariably goes *pari passu* with their wages. They seem to be generally improvident and regardless of the future, and spend in beer-drinking, dancing, and idleness all they earn." "Sunday is always remarkable for the crowds of people moving in all directions in pursuit of pleasure, such as beer-drinking, dancing, concert music, excursions by boat and rail. The same love of pleasure and the same indifference to labor seem to animate all classes of society."

From Wurtemberg:

"The condition of such hard-working women is made still worse by the fact that in many, if not in most, of the larger German towns, nearly every fifth house is a place where intoxicating beverages of some kind are abundantly sold. If there is anywhere a class of persons who can justly complain of a hard lot in life, it is the poor laboring women in Germany."

In no countries, according to Dr. Sanger, in his comprehensive "History of Prostitution," is the social evil so prevalent as in wine-drinking France, and beer-cursed Germany. The houses of prostitution under Government regulation, are wine or beer shops. And Dr. Bourgeois, an eminent scientist of Paris, in his work entitled "The Passions in Relation to Health and Disease," in discussing the causes of libertinism, bears testimony that "Alcoholic Liquors, especially beer, favor the development of this vice."

These vitiating effects of beer-drinking are also noticeable on this continent. Dr. M. L. Holbrook, a physician and author, spent a month as a juror in one of the criminal courts in New York City, and thus testifies concerning the relations of "Lager Beer and crime":

"During the long session of the court, I was pained to see that most of the criminals were young, and that in a majority of instances they had been drunk more or less when committing their depredations on society. We had five or six murderers on trial, and nearly all had been drinking before the murder what a German would call a moderate amount of lager beer—say from one to two quarts—and sometimes with it ale. Perhaps the most painful murder case before the court was that of a boy seventeen years old, son of very respectable parents, who killed a comrade while entirely under the influence of lager beer. The fight which occurred at the same time was between about a dozen boys from fifteen to twenty, and all had drunk lager beer freely."