

EARLY STAGE OF INEBRIETY.

There are found in all parts of the country men and women who use alcohol regularly and in limited quantities. To the casual observer they go on for years in this state and are apparently no worse, and finally die at last of some common disease, leaving the reputation of having lived what the inebriate would call an "ideal life" of moderate drinking. Why they drink is not clear. If they have any reasons, it is always sustained by their unbounded faith in the capacity at any time at will. These cases are inebriates in every respect, except in the prominence and intensity of the symptoms. There is no difference between the chronic case of the lowest type and the highly respectable moderate drinker, except one of degree.

Both are suffering from a positive physical disease. In one case the disorder is developed, in the other it is in the incipient stage. In the latter, from some obscure reason, the case never goes on to full development, but is always on the "border land," awaiting the action of some exciting cause, which may or may not be applied. A repelling power exists, which builds up and neutralizes the injuries received from alcohol to a certain extent. It is not will power which makes the difference between the inebriate and moderate drinker. It is physiological and pathological conditions of the brain and nervous system, which the possessor ascribes to will power. Alcohol cannot be used in moderation without grave injuries to the nerve centers.

The moderate drinker is always diseased, although to the non-expert there are no clear symptoms or course lesions that can be seen. A careful study will reveal physically an irritable condition of the heart, with stomach and digestive troubles, also changing and disordered functional activity of all the organs, at times. Physically the disposition, habits, temper, and mental state slowly and gradually degenerate and become more unstable. The higher mental forces drop down or give place to lower motives and ambitions. No matter what his position of life may be or his objects or plans, the moderate use of alcohol will alter and break down both physical and physical energy, and precipitate destruction. Moderate users of alcohol always die from diseases provoked and stimulated by this drug. They always transmit a legacy of defective cell energy and exhaustion, which most readily finds relief in any alcohol or narcotic.

But only a small per cent. of moderate drinkers remain so until death. The disease goes on to full development in inebriety, in a vast majority of cases. The boasted will power to stop at all times is powerless before its peculiar exciting cause. The moderate use of spirits for a lifetime is a mere accident in the order of nature, and the ability to stop, resting in the will power, is a popular fallacy. A certain number of cases have signs of incipient phthisis, which may never burst out into the full disease.

A small number of cases exposed to small pox, never take it; but these are the rare exceptions, whose causes are unknown, from which no deductions can be drawn. Moderate drinking that does not go on to inebriety is also the exception. The chain of exciting causes that bring on these extreme stages may or may not be understood, but they always break out sooner or later in the history of the case. Practically the study of this early stage of inebriety is of the utmost value in the treatment. Here medical measures can be made of the greatest avail in checking and preventing any farther progress of the disease. When inebriety is fully recognized as a diseased condition, requiring study and medical care, this prodromic period of moderate drinking will receive the attention it deserves.

In the meantime, as scientific men, we must continue to call attention to this early beginning of inebriety, so full of indication and hints of the march of disease, whose progress and termination can often be predicted with positive certainty.—*Journal of Inebriety.*

Tales and Sketches.

"THE LAST GLASS."

"No, thank you, not any to-night, boys, for me,
I have drunk my last glass, I have had my last spree;
You may laugh in my face, you may sneer if you will,
But I've taken the pledge, and I'll keep it until
I am laid in the churchyard and sleep 'neath the grass,
And your sneers can not move me—I've drunk my last glass.

"Just look at my face; I am thirty to-day:
It is wrinkled and hollow; my hair has turned gray;
And the light of my eye, that once brilliantly shone,
And the bloom of my cheek, both are vanished and gone.
I am young, but the furrows of sorrow and care
Are stamped on a brow once with innocence fair.

"Ere manhood its seal on my forehead had set
(And I think of the past with undying regret),
I was honored and loved by the good and the true,
Nor sorrow, nor shame, nor dishonor I knew:
But the tempter approached me, I yielded and fell,
And drank of the dark, damning poison of hell.

"Since then I have trod in the pathway of sin,
And bartered my soul to the demon of gin;
Have squandered my manhood in riotous glee.
While my parents, heart-broken abandoned by me,
Have gone to the grave, filled with sorrow and shame,
With a sigh for the wretch that dishonored their name.

I've drunk my last glass! never more shall my lip
Of that fatal, that soul-scorching beverage sip:
Too long has the fiend in my bosom, held sway,
Henceforth and forever I spurn him away.
And—God helping me—never again shall the foul draught,
That brings ruin eternal, by me shall be quaffed.

"So, good-night, boys, I thank you, no liquor for me:
I have drunk my last glass, I have had my last spree.
You may laugh in my face, you may sneer if you will,
But I've taken the pledge, and I'll keep it until
I am laid in the churchyard and sleep 'neath the grass,
And your sneers can not move me—I've drunk my last glass. —*Ex.*

"RING IN THE TRUE."

BY JOHN HABBERTON.

The richest people are not always the happiest, but on the last day of December of a year that need not be designated by its calendar number, the most joyous heart in the little manufacturing city of Thornton, was Mrs. Alice Arthray, wife of the owner of the great Arthray mills. Although she had passed her fortieth birthday, she would not have exchanged places with the prettiest girl in the city of which, when she and Thornton were twenty years younger, she had been, though poor and simple, the reigning belle. Good health, a clear conscience, a good husband and an active mind had so steadily increased her beauty, spirits and appreciation of everything worth enjoying, that she looked forward eagerly for the year to come, instead of longing for those that had passed. Although most of her time was spent in New York, she was the ruling spirit in her native town, for she never returned to her Thornton residence without at least one new hobby that all her old acquaintances were eager to ride.

This time her hobby was New Year's calls. Thornton society had so divided and sub-divided itself into cliques that families once on intimate terms, now scarcely saw one another. Mrs. Arthray believed that the original Knickerbocker system of receiving all one's old acquaintances on New Year's day would break up this undesirable exclusiveness, and she was now, for the first time, able to put this theory into practice. At least a score of other ladies were willing to assist at their own houses.

Oscar Arthray fully approved his wife's plan; his only advice was: "Don't neglect any of your old admirers, my dear, even if they're now prosy old farmers or stupid mechanics. I don't want any one of them to remain miserable under the impression that you might have been happier had you married him instead of me. Men will be foolish on the subject of their old flames, unless absolutely prevented."

So Mrs. Arthray mailed cards to all whom she could remember, whether she had recently seen them or not, and her memory proved so good that the post-office clerk was mystified at seeing tiny envelopes addressed to several men who had been dead for years.

Among the young men whom Mrs. Arthray remembered pleasantly was Tom Dolser; indeed, she had never known anything against him except that he sometimes drank liquor. She had long ceased to know or hear anything about him, but most of the old residents knew that Tom had become the most hopeless sot in the village. His home was the stable of the common tavern that had once been the village hotel, and for serving in the