

"Altogether too many."

"This is no answer. Of course even a single drunkard is one too many. But with prohibition laws before us, the question is pertinent. Is the number of drunkards so large as to justify the coercion of those who may use intoxicating drink, but with due moderation? No advocate of prohibition will dare maintain that habitual drunkards form a majority."

"I, myself, do not believe that such is the case."

"If I am not very much mistaken, there are not more than two percent of the adult population, that can be styled drunkards. Add to these six, eight or even ten per cent. of people, who, without habitual excess, yet now and then become intoxicated, and you will find that twelve out of every hundred over-indulge, whilst eighty-eight per cent. either abstain entirely or use drink with moderation. Will this percentage justify prohibitive legislation?"

"It would not, if your figures were correct, but I fear you purposely put them too low."

"I do not think so, and you may easily convince yourself that they are approximately correct. Call to your memory all your acquaintances, and count the drunkards amongst them, or compare the population of a place with the police records of drunkenness, and you will find that my figures come very near the truth."

"But how does it come, then, that the papers are teeming with accounts of drunken brawls?"

"In the most simple manner, Sam. The papers make no mention of the sober people, they only emphasize the cases of drunkenness, and hence you are apt to believe that everybody is drinking to excess, unless you use your multiplication tables. Besides, in order to arrive at a satisfactory solution of such a burning question, it is not enough simply to state the amount of drunkards, but we have to examine into the reasons of this drunkenness. It is, for instance, acknowledged that the per capita consumption of whiskey before our civil war was higher than at present, and yet the number of habitual drunkards lower. How would you account for this?"

"Well, I suppose, they were a hardier race, better able to withstand the consequences of their cups."

"This hardly accounts for it. The human constitution has not become so much deteriorated in this short space of time. But it cannot be denied that if man did not deteriorate, whiskey did. In a word, the drinks sold are no longer genuine, and this accounts for a good deal, though it is not the only reason."

"What other reason or reasons have you?"

"Sam, if you keep your eyes open, you will find that, as a rule, drunkenness increases with the number of factories. As long as a country is an agricultural one, it remains comparatively sober, but in proportion to its industries drunkenness increases."

"There is undoubtedly a large grain of truth in that assertion, but I account for it simply by the number of saloons. Wherever a factory is built, bar-rooms in ever increasing number open at once."

"Admitting the fact, I deny the inference. You mistake cause and effect, as you take it for granted that the existence of the bar creates the drinking habit, whilst, to my mind, the desire or rather want of drink creates the bar. You see, it is the old question of supply and demand, and I maintain, that in this case, the demand creates the supply, and not *vice versa*."

"But how are you going to prove this?"

"By the fact that saloons remain few in number wherever there is little industry and multiply where industry holds sway. If the supply would create the demand an increasing number of bar-rooms would correspondingly increase the consumption of drink, whereas experience teaches that bars in such localities simply go to the wall."

"Supposing so, it fails to prove the necessity of bar-rooms in industrial districts."

"It may not exactly prove it, but it infers it, since the existence of these saloons can only be accounted for on a supposed demand for them. Nor need we go far to find the reason for this demand. In a country and at a time when time is money, the quiet and moderate activity of former days gave way to a restless, feverish activity, which puts nerves and muscles of man to their utmost strain and wastes his strength with ever increasing rapidity, and of all the means to repair that waste there is none more handy or more expeditious