

tremens painting the portrait of intoxicated senators. Moreover, among the class of people of whom I speak, the conception of how to make merry at a christening or a wedding or a banquet or at the conclusion of peace, or of any such poor occasions of happiness that mark the milestones in the pilgrimage of life, was exactly the same—I say it in all reverence—as that shown by Jesus Christ at the wedding feast of Cana of Galilee.

But these people, one might object, are but a class and a small one at that. What about the ordinary working man? Surely he is not to be sacrificed for the sake of the leisure hours of the intellectual classes! But here, so it seems to me, is where the strongest argument against prohibition comes in. We live in a world of appalling inequality, which as yet neither philanthropy nor legislation has been able to remove. The lot of the working man who begins day labor at the age of sixteen and ends it at the age of seventy, who starts work every morning while the rest of us are still in bed, who has no sleep after his lunch and no vacation trip to Florida, is inconceivably hard. It is a sober fact that if those of us who are doctors, lawyers, professors and merchants were suddenly transferred by some evil magician to the rank of a working man, we should feel much as if we had been sent to the penitentiary. And it is equally a fact that we should realize just how much a glass of ale and a pipe of tobacco means to a sober industrious working man—not a picture-book drunkard—after his hours of work. It puts him for the brief moment of his relaxation on an equality with kings and plutocrats.

It is no use to say that tobacco shortens his life. Let it. It needs shortening. It is no use to say that beer sogs his oesophagus and loosens his motor muscles. Let it do so. He is better off with loose motor muscles and a soggy oesophagus and a mug of ale beside him, than in the cheerless discontent of an activity that knows only the work of life and nothing of its comforts.

The employers of labor have hitherto, through sheer shortsightedness, been in favor of prohibition. They thought that drinkless men would work better. So they will in the short spurt of efficiency that accompanies the change. But let the employer wait a year or two and then see how social discontent will spread like a wave in the wake of prohibition. The drinkless workman, robbed of the simple comforts of life, will angrily demand its luxuries. A new envy will enter into his heart. The glaring inequalities of society will stand revealed to him as never before. See to it that he does not turn into a Bolshevik.

Loud were the plaudits of the prohibitionists when Russia emptied its vodka into the Neva and declared itself bone-dry. Yet look at Russia now.

But when all is said and done there is little use in arguing or protesting against the new regime. The thing is coming.