

Temperance and Prohibition.

HEREDITY FROM ALCOHOL.

BY REV. T. D. CROTHERS.

A young man from a good family committed an atrocious murder and was put on trial for his life. His grandfather had been an excessive drinker. His father and mother had both drank moderately at meals. His life and history indicated great brain feebleness and degrees of insanity for at least two years before the murder. Public sentiment was very strong against him at the trial. The district attorney had employed an able lawyer to assist him, and he publicly announced that the cause of justice demanded the prisoner's death. Two distinguished physicians were retained to swear to the sanity of the prisoner. I was called as an expert in his defence. As the trial went on it was evident that the efforts of the State would be directed to break the force of my testimony as to the insanity of the prisoner. I answered the hypothetical question and explained it at some length for the defence, and then was cross-examined by the State's attorney, who was evidently determined to destroy the impression which I had produced on the jury.

The attorney was a man of keen intellect and a thorough master of the art of examining witnesses. After trying various measures to create confusion in my statements, he settled down to a scientific examination, insisting on exact answers without qualifications. As the examination progressed it was evident to both of us that we were surprising each other in questions and answers. There was in his questioning unmistakable indications of a very clear knowledge of the alcoholic mind and method of reasoning such as can never be described in books.

Although two able physicians were seated at his side suggesting questions, it was evident that his knowledge of such cases was far superior to theirs, and the turns and forms of questions were revelations of familiarity with the subject that was a surprise to me.

At the close of the day's trial I concluded that a personal acquaintance with the attorney might give me an insight into the mentality that would be to my advantage in the next day's examination, which after a night of consultation and preparation would undoubtedly be still more severe. Upon being introduced by the judge, I, in an undertone, remarked to the attorney that I had never before been examined by any one who had such acute knowledge of the drink craze and its victims, and that I knew that this knowledge did not come from books. After a moment's hesitation he answered me with a quivering lip, "Yes, I know of this matter personally in my family and it has been a skeleton to me."

He asked me to come to his room at the hotel that evening for a personal talk. The interview lasted until midnight. He then told me of his only son who was expelled from college for drinking, and of how he had driven him away from his home against the advice of his wife, and that his son was now serving a life sentence for murder in a western prison. He spoke of his bitter feeling against the attitude his wife had taken, for she had insisted that the boy was diseased. This he himself could not believe, and he reviewed the heartburnings and sorrows which followed the death of his wife, and her steadfast faith in the mental sickness of the boy, and the disapproval of his own harshness; and

how at her death he realized that she was right, but his pride and position made him fear to think of this subject seriously. He spoke of his own drinking days, and of his abstinence at his wife's request after the birth of his son. Even on this trial he did not dare to permit his feelings to assume the possibility of mental disease. I told him frankly that he made a mistake, that his wife was right, that his boy was a victim, the direct transmission of his own drinking habits.

We shook hands and parted with a cordiality which was not apparent in the next day's examination, and yet beneath the bluff and stern exterior I could see the real man struggling to put the question so that my answers would be the least favorable to his interest. The case was won. My testimony prevailed and the victim was placed in an insane asylum, where he died two years later. No one knew that our midnight interview saved the prisoner from judicial murder.

A few years afterward, this lawyer employed me as an expert in the defence of a similar case. At the close of the trial I went to his home and there was introduced to his son, a poor, harmless, half-idiotic man. No questions were asked, but I knew that he had only recently been released and brought home to die. The father's tenderness toward him showed this. The crime had been committed in another state, and no one knew the facts of the case.

A year later this lawyer was found dead in his bed, and the boy was placed in a private asylum, where he is now living. Fortunately, his mind is gone and he is unable to recall the past. This incident illustrates some of the startling facts not recognized, which can be traced through families of alcoholic heredity, followed by great misery and sorrow and often judicial murders. Poor alcoholized, insane men, whose parents and relatives are responsible, are constantly going to the gallows, and the harsh delusions of the law of sanity and reason are contradicted by every possible fact and condition.

DOES THIS FIT YOU?

The one power that the liquor traffic dreads is the conscientious vote of a roused electorate. The movement in question can only fail of success because of the failure of Christian men to support it. To electors who hesitate to do their duty, we commend the following slightly modified article, taken from a recent issue of *The Christian Advocate*:

"A dozen men are straining and staggering under the weight of a heavy steel girder. One of them winces as it chafes his shoulder. He thinks that he can no longer bear the weight and pain. He says to himself, I know a quick way out of this. He slips away and leaves his share of the burden on other shoulders, some of which are as sore as his. He is a coward of the rankest type. No newspaper would give a line in extenuation of his flinching. He is on a par with the soldier who throws away his gun in action, and leaves the burden of defence on his weakened comrades." If this be so, if this man who shows the white feather is a coward, by what name shall we define those who, for reasons of policy or fear, get out from under the staggering load of some reform that rolls upon their fellows in their village, their city, or their nation?

Call "the staggering load of reform" the "prohibition of the liquor traffic a soul-destroying agency and its elimination from politics," and the coward is the voter who "winces" under the epithet of being a "prohibition crank."

A vast crowd of these citizen-cowards stand around every election day, and let a brave few stagger under the weight of the most needed reform movement of our times.

IS IT RIGHT?

Is it right to build churches to save men, asks a contemporary, and at the same time license shops that destroy them?

Is it right to license men to sell that which will make a man drunk, and then punish the man for getting drunk?

Is it right to derive a revenue out of a traffic which no decent man defends?

Is it right to license a man to make paupers, and then tax sober men to take care of them?

Is it right to license a saloon to teach vice, and then tax people for schools to teach virtue?

Is it right to teach a boy to restrain his passions, and then vote to license a place where his worst passions will be inflamed?

Is it right to take care of your own boy and vote to license a place which ruins your neighbor's boy?

Is it right to preach justice and charity, and then vote to license a thing which robs the widow and orphans of their bread?

NOTES OF THE TRAFFIC.

—As a result of the restoration of the license system in Vermont, intoxication during the month increased at the ratio of three to one as compared with the previous year and month.

—The saloons of Santa Monica, Cal., were closed last year, and arrests for drunkenness have dropped 80 per cent. In three months the bank deposits in the city increased \$46,000.

—The total cost of liquors consumed in Great Britain and Ireland in 1902 is said to have been \$179,499,817. As the population of the United Kingdom was officially estimated in the middle of the year at 41,952,510, the average expenditure for drink was more than \$20.00 per head. It is believed that within the last twenty-three years the nation has spent \$3,654,590,246 for intoxicating liquors, an annual average of \$158,885,228.

—Even in beer-soaked Germany many of the leading minds are being aroused by the evils of liquor drinking, and a movement is on to limit them. Generals in the army and prominent publicists are using their influence to curtail the drink traffic. The progress must be slow; but, as in France, where the leaders are becoming appalled by the drain of the liquor business upon the material and moral well-being of the people, it is to be hoped it will be sure.

—Dr. Dawson Burns has published his annual statement of the drink bill of the United Kingdom in 1902. It amounts to within \$2,500 of \$900,000,000. This is more than two-and-one-half times the sum spent on the army and navy, which is considered stupendous. And yet the people of the Motherland have all this greater treasure to waste. When shall we grapple with this tremendous evil, of which the waste of money is anything but the greatest or saddest feature.

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