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Wright (M. B.)

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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

OHIO STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY,

AT ITS

ANNUAL SESSION, JUNE, 1859.

BY

M. B. WRIGHT, M. D.



COLUMBUS:

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Translating the German and Latin: at Leipzig for the University.

AN ADDRESS

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BY

WILLIAM WRIGHT, M.D.

OF

W. W. WRIGHT, M.D.

COLEMAN:

PRINTED BY WRIGHT, WRIGHT & CO.

1855.

A D D R E S S .

Members of the Ohio State Medical Society :

An authorized committee of your body has kindly invited me to address you on this occasion. In the note of invitation, a wish was expressed that I should select some subject appropriate to an "un-professional as well as professional ear." At the moment, there seemed to be no one subject in which the mass of the people had a deeper interest, or upon which they should feel more keenly, than "Asylums for Inebriates." As these asylums are designed, not for the punishment nor for the safe-keeping, but for the *cure* of the inebriate, we shall embrace in the discussion, indeed, as its foundation, *the nature of drunkenness*. Thus, you will see, has been opened an extended field of thought, too extended for anything more, at this time, than partial examination.

To the relief of individual suffering, and the promotion of public good, are the best energies of the physician directed. His plans of action, however, are often defeated, and his hopes withered for want of encouragement and sympathy. And no association of men need look for any great, durable achievement, unless sustained by general sentiment and interest. The importance of establishing asylums in our State for the benefit of those whose reason had been impaired, and of those to whom the light of earth and the beauties of nature had been utter darkness, had been forcibly advocated by medical men ; yet these asylums stand as speaking monuments of the philanthropy and generosity of the people.

As a Society, with our minds enlightened and expanded by the demands of the age, and with our energies vigorously directed, we

can give a true direction to public sentiment, and bring to completion that which, otherwise, might not have been undertaken. While I am now speaking, I feel that the sympathies and ready coöperation of the people are subject to our call; and my strongest hope is, that I may present drunkenness in that true light its importance demands.

It has been supposed by men in general, that drunkenness, in all its aspects, is under the control of the will, and that its results are those of voluntary debasement. Taking a more philosophical view, however, some have associated it with disease of both body and mind, and have been directing their energies to appropriate sources of cure. All means heretofore employed to arrest drunkenness have failed; and the inference is, they were not adapted to the malady. Treated as an outcast, the unfortunate victim has become rebellious, and, perhaps, the passion leading him to destruction has been strengthened, just as chains and stripes, heretofore used, rendered the condition of the insane more deplorable.

To administer a remedy in every-day practice with any hope of success, we must ascertain the seat and nature of disease. And to impress upon the mind the importance of any plan of treatment for the cure of drunkenness, it may be proper to inquire what it is.

In the examination of machinery, we admire its polish, its nice adjustments, and its skillfully-balanced power. Within a given time, and with entire safety to itself, its wheels may perform a given number of revolutions. Accelerated beyond this, the whole structure begins to shake; joints are opened, screws are loosened, bolts are broken, and alarming injury speedily follows.

As a general proposition, we admit the intricate structure of the human body, and that it must be, beyond all cavil, the work of Omnipotence; yet, with all its complications, how careless are we in our estimate of its harmonious action and powers of endurance. Blood, air and food are natural stimuli for keeping the body in healthful action, and artificial aids are not necessary to secure an even balance between waste and repair. These aids are only useful when vitality, under the influence of some extraneous cause, has become greatly depressed. The system generates within itself a sufficient amount of heat for its own preservation, and requires no outside addition, except to counterbalance some sudden or unnatural loss. For its healthful exercise, then, the body requires no other exciting agents than those which nature, under the direction of Infinite Wisdom,

supplies. All other things are artificial, useless, destructive, and scarcely deserve to be used, even as illustrations of the ingenuity of man.

It is true, the body has great powers of adaptation, and may not be destroyed by long-continued morbid impressions. Still, danger is always near, ready, and more than willing, to act upon circumstances. A cancer has been a long time taking root in the cheek, without despoiling it of its beauty, but, by and by, those soft tints begin to fade—the texture gives way, and a painful, hideous deformity is presented. It is equally true that the system may not suffer from a given amount of alcoholic potation, but, repeat it, increase it, and the whole man becomes maddened by an uncontrollable demand for more—his character being now fully established as a drunkard.

Habit and its effects begin at a very early age, and may be traced onward threescore years and ten. The infant receives its morning ablutions, in the arms of the nurse it takes its daily promenade, and at regular periods receives from its fond mother the pure substance intended by nature for its nourishment. Deprive it of either of these, and it becomes restless and irritable. Give it food to which it has not been accustomed, and it becomes uneasy, perhaps sick. Soon the stomach digests this food, and appropriates it to its own uses more readily than any other kind.

The chewer and smoker and snuffer are under the dominion of *habit*. There is nothing *natural* in the use of tobacco. It contains nothing that could charm the unperverted senses, either in odor or taste. On the contrary, it is offensive and nauseous. An individual commences its use, as an imitator, from a desire to engage in a manly accomplishment. At first he sickens, but having learned the advantages of repetition, tries it again. He sickens, and tries it again, until the system is goaded into a recognition of its more pleasant effects as a *habit*. Breakfast is enjoyed in anticipation of a cigar afterward. Has too much dinner become oppressive? the cigar brings relief. Puffing at leisure, after tea, when the business and perplexities of the day are over, gives a miniature view of Elysium. And then, during all intervals, it is the solace of mental trouble and bodily pain. Once established as a source of courage and contentment, nothing is done promptly or correctly without it. And it is easy to anticipate the next step, should the bottle be near.

Is a man a frequent visitor at any one place in which liquors are sold? he finds it almost impossible to proceed on his way until his ap-

petite shall have been gratified. During a conversation with one of the most distinguished lawyers and political men in Ohio, he confessed that he was descending into the dark vale, rapidly and prematurely, by his own acts. "I will not say that those acts are voluntary," said he, "for they are beyond control. Take what street I may, from my office to my dwelling, I must pass some place in which brandy is sold. It has been my habit for many years to stop and drink at some one of these places, and as I approach them my thirst becomes as fierce and ungovernable as a famished tiger in sight of blood. I have said *thirst* but the term is unmeaning when used to express the feelings, the maddened impulses, by which an intemperate man is driven to the bottle."

The indulgence of strange and revolting appetites, will illustrate the control of the stomach or brain, in a morbid state, over the entire individual. One has eaten the soap, bar after bar, of the washerwoman, and with great relish. Another has devoured candles greedily. Another has taken from the grease-keg putrid meat, and eaten it in preference to the most savory dish of the epicure. Young ladies at school eat clay, coal, chalk, slate pencils, and plaster from the walls.

From a continued use of narcotic stimulants, the nervous system, controlling not only the functions of the stomach but other organs, becomes morbid. It is fascinated, as it were, by its own destroyer, and is willing to go whither it may lead. Is it the delicious taste of whiskey that lures the drunkard to a repetition of his draught? No. With many, both odor and taste are offensive. Watch the inebriate in his movements. The glass is in his hand. He has drank and drank, until his stomach is full to distention. He raises the poison to his lips again and again, each time nausea evincing a surfeit. He pauses, his face becoming flushed, and his eyes fixed. He struggles, not to resist, but to throw himself into the merciless grasp of the tempter. What induced this but an ungovernable habit, an insatiable desire for more? The stomach became turbulent, and evinced a determination to resist, but it was subdued by the master-passion, the desire for drink.

Man is a creature of imitation, and is governed far more by the force of example than precept. The moralist is ready to admit this, and yet how often does he reflect, that bad habits have had a beginning in one by observing them in another. They spread like a contagion. May I not illustrate without giving offense?

A minister ascends the pulpit, having reluctantly and impatiently

thrown away the last stump of his cigar. The odor adheres to him more closely than incense from the altar on which he kneels. He masticates his quid eagerly, that he may deprive it of its juice before he rises to read his text. He exhorts his congregation earnestly and eloquently to control their passions, to restrain their excesses, and to cultivate to refinement their better natures. Then he admits, in the social circle, there is bliss in the use of his narcotic, and that his desire to partake of it is irresistible. Which is capable of exercising most control over the drunkard, his ministerial advice, or his individual example?

How many infants and children, think you, there are in this city almost drunkards? Infants and children! Yes; those, too, who are as dear to you as your own lives. Consider, for a moment, the facts. You invade the sanctity of your home fireside by the use of a poison. The smoke of your cigar fills your parlor, your bed-room, your nursery, and the lungs of your children. These children become narcotized, and their nervous systems forced into a state of disease, which, sooner or later, will demand a counteracting stimulus. Thus, in the bud of life, when sweet innocence demands assiduous care and protection, are we nourishing a worm that will eat into its core. Thus are we sowing, in the very blood of our children, the germs of intemperance.

It will not be denied, that the nature of the parent, whether original or induced, is transmitted to the child. Is the parent a consumptive? the child may become one also. Is the parent insane? a fearful fate portends the child. Is the parent a drunkard? the feebleness, the waywardness, the disease which his habits have implanted, may be all transmitted to the child. Oh, what a fearful risk, what a load of responsibility, does that parent assume who makes of himself a drunkard! A drunkard by inheritance! What a terrible reflection.

It is true, that the parents of many dissipated young men have been prominent examples of abstemiousness, and sound practical virtue. Early indulgence, an unfortunate selection of associates, and the usual kindred causes, counterbalance the best parental teaching. Yet, daily and extended observation has led us into the belief that the children of those who use tobacco to excess, and those who drink spirits to habitual drunkenness, or those who keep themselves under the almost constant influence of morphine, opium, or like narcotics, are unsteady in their purposes, impulsive in their undertakings, and

are easily led into ruinous excesses. And the question may be asked, with some show of reason, how long will it take, with the present and increasing rate of progress, to make this a nation of drunkards?

It is claimed, that if drunkenness were hereditary, the passion for strong drink should be developed in early as well as mature life. It is occasionally so—not always, for the plain reason that the laws of transmission do not render it necessary. The foundation of disease, as the virus of hydrophobia, has remained in the system unperceived many years. A taint of scrofula and consumption has passed from parent to child; yet, by careful living, avoiding unhealthful exposure, and by sustaining, in every possible way, the tone of the system, it has been prevented from assuming an active form during a long period, and, it may be, a whole life. A son, in whose veins runs the blood of an intemperate father, requires to be nurtured with unusual care; and, mingling in busy life, he must studiously avoid the temptations of the bottle, or his fall will be as certain as his birth.

The important bearing which this has upon the marriage relation should be duly considered. A female, not unfrequently, has a long and deep struggle between love and duty. Her heart has yielded its tenderness to the influences of mental culture, polished address, and generous sympathy, while her reason has thrown over all these commendable qualities the pall of degradation and want. There is one thing more, however, demanding her anxious and earnest consideration. She must be prepared to ask herself the question—Besides my own immediate suffering, will I not be held responsible for the misery entailed on an innocent and helpless offspring?

One may ask, Do you call *drinking*, mere *drinking*, a disease? Certainly not. The disease consists, essentially, of an unconquerable thirst for narcotic stimulants, having for its foundation change of structure or function. Like every other disease, drunkenness has its own peculiar symptoms. Smallpox and measles are classed among eruptive diseases, yet they are distinct in appearance, in progress, in effects. Convulsion is a term clearly expressive of the external symptoms of disease, yet it conveys no satisfactory idea of the point from which these symptoms radiated. To know when a man is drunk, it is not necessary to know what state of the stomach or brain or nervous system excites the desire to be drunk. In other words, the fact that we may not be able to describe the true morbid state of the stomach, impelling to drunkenness, or to the use of liquor,

to a greater or less extent, is no argument against the existence of a morbid state.

It may be said further, that we know nothing of that fatal scourge, cholera, except by its symptoms, dissections of thousands upon thousands of bodies having revealed nothing satisfactory respecting its pathology. From the mind of the maniac, every ray of calm thought may have been excluded during a long and dreary life, and still the brain may have been carefully examined after death, without any thing unnatural having been visible. Strychnine, in very large doses, leaves no other trace of its action than death.

At times, however, the stomach of the drunkard has been inflamed, softened, and thickened; his brain has been disorganized, its blood vessels have been attenuated, and its cavities filled with serum.

The inquiry may be presented here, Is the drinking the *cause* or the *effect* of morbid changes? We are inclined to think they are mutually cause and effect. Take a man whose nervous system is in a condition demanding narcotic stimulants, and who obeys this demand. The thirst and the indulgence follow each other in rapid succession. The stomach, which has seemingly maintained the integrity of its functions, becomes sensitive to pressure; it digests food imperfectly, and frequently ejects its contents. Still the gnawing desire for drink is in no way alleviated. Time rolls on, and epilepsy prostrates the man in the dust, with intellect enfeebled, and with his limbs less strong and elastic. The pitiable, yet unpitied victim, indulges in still greater excess. He meets a companion on the highway, to whom, in a spirit of kindness, he extends his bottle. They drink, wishing each other good luck and good health. They quarrel, and, in a scuffle, the owner of the bottle falls. He is taken to his home; he lies on his bed, and in a few hours dies. His brain is examined, and found to be unnatural in structure; an artery has been ruptured, and a large clot of blood is compressing the brain.

This is no fancy sketch. The disease in this man's brain increased in proportion to the amount he drank, and the demand for drink was regulated by the increase of disease. The cause and the effect, alternated with each other, they strengthened each other in their progress, and, without coercion, they would not be separated.

In 1845 I delivered an address on Drunkenness and Insanity, in which I endeavored to draw the features of each, and to exhibit their close resemblance. They were placed on parallel lines, and no change of climate, or variableness of temperature—no modification of cir-

cumstances or ingenuity of man have changed their relations. Although on this occasion we shall pursue another train of reflections, we may pause for a moment, and present a few facts, bearing on the above discussion, for your earnest consideration.

An individual who has occupied an enviable position in all the relations of life, has become unusually loquacious or taciturn, pleasant or morose. He is insulting in his language and threatening in his manner. Claiming to be a king, he commands unqualified submission—a Cræsus, and his money is foolishly squandered. Between friend and enemy he makes no distinction, or if he should discriminate, he chooses the former for his victim. An expression of calm intelligence has given place to a wild, unmeaning stare. His apparel no longer betokens order and decency, for he is bare at the elbows and knees—one foot is shoeless, his hair is uncombed and matted, and his face is covered with dirt. Now, tell me, is this man drunk or insane, taking your own views of these states? Ask not, has he been drinking or suffering misfortune? Inquire not into the cause, but tell me, is he drunk or insane?

You may not give an answer, perhaps, until it has been determined how long the manifestations have been continued. This cannot be taken as a satisfactory criterion. The minds of the drunkard and insane may continue in their weakness and wanderings an indefinite period, or they may be controlled alike by the laws of periodicity. Men become drunk and sober at stated times—in like manner others become insane.

Why an individual should have a clear, discriminating, logical intellect one month, and the next be clouded, unsettled, fanciful and wild, is past our comprehension. Nor can we touch that secret spring which makes a man, alternately, a lazy drunkard and an industrious penitent. Still, facts sustaining these points, are innumerable and beyond dispute.

There is even a more close connection between drunkenness and insanity. There have been many well authenticated cases in which insanity became fully developed before the slightest desire for alcoholic drinks was felt, after which it grew fearfully violent. The wandering of intellect, and the inordinate thirst, continued and terminated together.

Men differ in their physical, and why not in their mental constitution? There are some who are cheerful, calculating and energetic, while on the highway of prosperity, while, in adversity, they are des-

ponding and inactive. Successful enterprises as well as great reverses have been causes of insanity. In like manner they have elevated or depressed nervous energy, resulting in drinking and drunkenness.

Aside from a professional view of this subject, let us take some of our daily observations and apply them to the formation of our opinions.

A young man is before us who has acquired, by industry and correct habits, the confidence of his employers, and the kind consideration of all who know him. His social qualities have gathered around him boon companions, and with them he is indulging in the so-called pleasures of the bottle. Drinking is fast becoming a habit. To the astonishment and regret of all he has been drunk. He has become sober, has apologized, expressed deep mortification, and has solemnly declared that the cup of ills shall never again pollute his lips. For a time he adheres to his pledges, and his conduct is exemplary. Suddenly he is observed to be restless and irritable, remembers his obligations, is excited by fears, and at every hazard he drinks, and is unconscious. Again he returns to sobriety, and with the threat that a loss of place shall follow the next transgression, he becomes sad, and without one ray of hope to enliven the dark and dreary future. Soon he loses all self-control, he is rejected by his employers, and has no fixed abode. The propensity to drink exhausts itself, as it were, as in other diseases, and penitence soon follows. Kind remembrances come to his rescue, and he is reinstated. It were needless to follow him further, for alas! you have, in your thoughts, thrown a dark mantle over his destiny. Was that a *willing* sacrifice, or was it impelled by disease?

Direct your thoughts to one whose kindness, amiability, and correctness in all things have been proverbial. No husband ever had a more just and tender appreciation of a good wife, or loved her with more devotion. No father ever bestowed more care over his children, or made more willing sacrifices for their benefit. No friend ever found him unfaithful or unready.

Gradually and stealthily a master-passion seized and controlled his better nature. He felt its power, and stood aghast as if a huge serpent had coiled itself around his limbs. Conscious of his true situation, he struggled to release himself, but he became overpowered and sank exhausted. His will was inactive, almost destroyed—he was a drunkard.

During the long months and years, which to him were made up alternately of effort and despair, he had pictured before him the unhappiness and ruin of his family, the injury he was inflicting on the religion he professed, and of which he had been an eloquent advocate, and his own frightful fall from the pulpit to the gutter; and yet, he could not resist. Was he an object of scorn or commiseration? Was not an insatiable disease weakening a finely cultivated nature, and fastening upon it a corroding and fatal passion?

It is always an unpleasant task to associate woman with anything that has stamped upon it a stain of degeneracy. We cherish such an admiration of her whole character, that it requires something more than our own reasoning to satisfy us that, by *her* original transgression, this has become a world of sin. She *knows* her power over man, and in what that power consists. Take her in all her varied relations to society, and there is not one in which she may not exert an influence, until she falls into the pit of the inebriate. Then she seems no longer a woman. Even *pity* comes to her grudgingly.

She knows all this, and knowing, could she voluntarily fall, having no other inducement than to fall? Will she abandon friends, and all the captivations of refined society—will she sever the ties of wife, of parent, of home, to partake of a worse than upas poison? It cannot be, it cannot be! There is a something within which has power to change her whole nature, and over which she has no control. She is an infant in the arms of a giant. She has a disease creating more dismay and spreading more havoc than the leprosy. Will it yield to the finger of scorn? Will coldness and neglect change its character? Will tears of affection wash it away? They never have, and they never will. Then let us look to some other source as a means of cure.

It may be asked, to what form of insanity is drunkenness allied? To that denominated *monomania*, which signifies derangement on some one subject, the reasoning faculties being good on every thing else; or some one impulse leading to injury. An individual thus affected, may be suddenly prompted to raise his hand and commit murder, from some imaginary cause, or without cause, unless mere desire may be considered cause. The millionaire fancies that he is dependent, and suddenly changes his liberality for the mean tricks of the miser. Has he been humble and unassuming? he is speedily elevated in his feelings to the dignity and power of a sovereign. The drunkard drinks and prostrates himself in the midst of desolation and

ruin, from an ungovernable impulse, from a power which seems to control his whole being.

This form of insanity, however, must be, like every other, associated with change of structure, for we know nothing of mind only as it flows through material channels. The brain is as necessary for its development as is the instrument for the production of music. Without a proper adjustment of its fibres, thoughts are given forth discordantly, and are no longer under the control of the will. Therefore, when we speak of insanity, we cannot lose sight of those changes known under the name, disease. With this understanding, why shall we not associate drunkenness either with mental or corporeal defect?

Like every other disease, drunkenness has its stages of development. The first perceptible link in the chain of diseased action, is the habit of the so-called moderate drinker. He drinks a measured quantity, at a given time. This quantity is gradually increased, and these times become more frequent. Then comes an instability of purpose and action, a change of moral sentiment, a change in physical appearance, followed by all the more prominent symptoms of the appalling disease.

From statistics carefully collected and arranged, it would seem that lunatic asylums have received larger accessions from the ranks of the intemperate than from any other class of individuals. It is fair to infer, therefore, that there has been an intimate connection between the drunkenness and the insanity.

In some of these cases, there may have been a constitutional taint, predisposing to both drunkenness and insanity, the predisposition remaining inactive until developed by excessive drinking.

In other and more frequent instances, however, the insanity has been the direct result of intemperance, without any original predisposition. Go back to the inception of intemperance, and trace its effects on until the iron door of a lunatic asylum has closed upon its victim. It may be that nothing was felt except a pleasant exhilaration of the feelings and perceptibilities. Then, the system having become somewhat accustomed to its use, required more to produce a similar effect. This additional quantity gave accelerated action to the brain, and its thoughts came forth in a whirl; the heart sent its red current through the system with feverish rapidity, while aches, and pains, and loss of appetite, aided to disclose the mischief that was being wrought. If the stimulus had been now withdrawn, all the

energies of the system would have sunk below the natural standard, and the man must have drunk, not to renew the pleasures of stimulation, but to counteract an insufferable depression. From this time all the functions of the body were in an unnatural state—locomotion was enfeebled, the mind was fitful and uncertain, the will lost its anchorage, and went out to be tossed, here and there, by fierce elements—the brain was diseased—the man was insane.

Now, take one step back over the line from that condition of brain which consigns a man to a mad-house, and you will have the true state of a confirmed inebriate. How much more has the one man a calm control over his thoughts and actions and fierce impulses than the other?

The easy or difficult management of disease depends upon its violence. Scarlet fever, prevailing as an epidemic, presents every gradation, from the mild to the malignant; the one yielding without special treatment, the other demanding the best-directed efforts. So it is with intemperance.

The insane, by a sudden impulse, by a strong, direct moral power, have been restored to reason as if by magic. Fear from impending danger has given elasticity to the lame, and made the bedridden leap like the hare; copious hemorrhage, and intense pain, have been suddenly arrested by strong moral impressions. The sick have lived through hope, and died through despair.

Similar impressions made on the mind and nervous system of the drunkard, have revived the power and exercise of the will, and the result has been permanent reformation. But this is an exception, and is no more to be expected in confirmed drunkenness than spontaneous cures of disease produced by malaria, changes of temperature, or specific contagion.

Delirium tremens may be viewed as an extreme link in the chain of drunkenness. To establish the fact, that the brain is in an unnatural state during its existence, it is only necessary to refer to a few of the symptoms. They consist of restlessness, sleeplessness, and agitation of the whole body. The individual imagines that he hears music, the roar of cannon, the sound of bells, the clatter of the locomotive, the rumbling of distant thunder, and all sorts of noises, undefined and painfully discordant. His eye is in constant motion, and objects, beautiful or grotesque, are incessantly flitting before it. He is excited to anxiety and terror by the approach of enemies, by the open jaws and glaring eyes of a monster, by the crawling of countless

vermin over his body, and by the nearness of faces with hideous and mocking aspect. In a word, there is no malady involving the brain that occasions such unspeakable agony as delirium tremens.

Take this phase of drunkenness back to the first link, and we will have presented to us, more clearly, perhaps, the nature of the first promptings to drink. Delirium tremens is not so much the effect of direct and immediate stimulation, as its complete or partial withdrawal. A brain that has been kept for a long time in a state of forced action, sinks into an almost powerless condition, if left to itself, and the demand for its accustomed stimulus is fearfully wild and ungovernable. Without this stimulus, the mind wanders into regions filled with fanciful objects, and beset with evil. It has Scylla on the one hand, and Charybdis on the other. If the man drinks, he is in danger of being killed; if he does not drink, he is in danger of dying. To a degree, this reflects the condition of the moderate, regular drinker. His disease is yet in its mild form.

The morbid impression made upon the brain continues, and increases with the continuance of drinking, until delirium tremens is induced. This unnatural state of the brain often yields to appropriate remedies, while many cases terminate fatally, and others settle down into incurable insanity. To the latter condition, I wish, for a moment, to direct your attention :

In the county of Hamilton, a man was convicted of the murder of his wife, and sentenced to be hung. The time came when he was required to ascend the scaffold, and to have the noose of the executioner around his neck; but as the few moments allotted him between time and eternity had nearly terminated, his sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. The circumstances and details of the crime were horrible, and the public and press were indignant that so foul a monster had escaped just punishment.

Remember, the mind of that man never returned to right reason. Delusions, with which he was surrounded while drinking, and which impelled him to the commission of crime, remained in a modified form during the two years of his solitary incarceration. If you had seen that man a few days before he died, tearing and jerking the bones from his frozen and mortified feet, his face reflecting the most intense fury, you would have had no occasion to ask, Is not his brain diseased?

A quotation from the letters of Coleridge, written at a time when he was addicted to an excessive use of opium, will conclude this

branch of our subject. His language is: "There is no hope! O God, how willingly would I place myself under Dr. Fox, in his establishment; for my case is a species of *madness*, only that it is a *derangement*, an utter *impotence of the volition*, and not of the intellectual faculties. You bid me rouse myself. Go bid a paralytic in both arms, to rub them briskly together, and that will cure him. 'Alas!' he would reply, 'that I *cannot move my arms* is my *complaint* and my *misery*.'"

In another place, he says: "Conceive a poor, miserable wretch, who, for many years, has been attempting to beat off pain by a constant recurrence to a vice that reproduces it. Conceive a spirit in hell, employed in tracing out for others the road to that heaven from which his crimes exclude him! In short, conceive whatever is most *wretched, helpless and hopeless*, and you will form as tolerable a notion of *my state* as it is possible for a good man to have."

Will you say, after this, it is easy to reform? Coleridge did reform, but it was at a cost of much torture of both body and mind.

It has been claimed, that narcotic stimulants have been used in all ages; that there is, constitutionally, a desire for artificial stimuli among all nations, savage or civilized, and among all classes of men. And it is claimed further, that men everywhere produce and consume that stimulus best adapted to their own physiological states. "Hence, Siberia has its fungus; Turkey, India and China, their opium; Persia, India and Turkey, with all Africa, from Morrocco to the Cape of Good Hope, and even the Indians of Brazil, have their hemp and haschisch; India, China and the Eastern Archipelago, their betel-nut and betel pepper; the Polynesian Islands, their daily ara; Peru and Bolivia, their long-used coca; New Grenada and the Himalayas, their red and common thorn-apple; Asia and America, and all the world, we may say, their tobacco."

In their zeal for the suppression of vice and encouragement of virtue, men have advocated and passed penal statutes against the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits. And as much as we might hope for an entire suppression of the liquor traffic, we must look at things as they are. The exceptions are so few, it may be said that the whole world is somewhat addicted to the use of narcotics and stimulants. And history furnishes us with examples of the utter futility of all laws adverse to the wishes and habits of the people. And it becomes a serious question, whether, in the reaction of public sentiment, from inefficacy of law, evils are not increased.

King James described the use of tobacco—"A custom loathesome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and, in the black, stinking fumes thereof, nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless." Yet, "in vain King James opposed it by his counterblast to tobacco; in vain Pope Urban the Eighth thundered out his bull against it; in vain was the use of it prohibited in Russia, and the knout threatened for the first offense, and death for the second. The priests and Sultans of Turkey and Persia declared smoking a sin against their holy religion; yet the Turks and Persians have become the greatest smokers in the world." Coercive laws will not make men love God, nor hate the devil. They may inculcate virtue, and restrain vice, but they will not implant the one in the heart, nor uproot the other from it. They should discourage intemperance, and, by the aid of the moralist, can do something to prevent its overflowing the land.

Our object on the present occasion, however, is not so much to arrest intemperance as to provide for the cure of those who cannot cure themselves.

In the establishment of asylums for inebriates, the object is not understood by some, or it is willfully perverted. It is not to provide for them a permanent home, where they can recline upon easy couches, partake of the fatness of good things, appear in costly apparel, and still drink to their satisfaction. It is that they may be placed under such restraint, and be subjected to such moral and medical treatment, as will arrest their inordinate desires, and enable them to exercise control over themselves.

Is a man a periodical drunkard? Anticipate the period of his excess by close confinement, until the period shall have passed, and you will prevent drunkenness as readily as you prevent a paroxysm of ague by giving quinine in advance of an attack. Let this confinement be continued uninterruptedly according to the frequency of the inebriate paroxysms; or intermit the treatment, so as to prevent the paroxysmal appetite being gratified. In this way the chain of morbid action becomes weakened, and at length destroyed.

The nervous energies recuperate, the will resumes its wonted sway, and the man is himself again. This is not a new idea. It is only applying daily practice in other diseases to the disease of the drunkard.

The confirmed daily drunkard will require longer treatment, sim-

ply on account of his physical and mental energies being more depressed.

It has been said that if men desire in sincerity to reform, they can exercise as much restraint in their own homes as in an asylum. This was at one time urged as an objection to the erection of asylums for the insane. Insanity being attributed to the devil, it was supposed it was as easy for his majesty to prevent good works in one place as in another.

But all experience establishes the fact, that the restraints and influences of home have been inadequate to the cure of the insane, while in asylums they have been speedily restored to reason. Having lost all power over his will, the drunkard cannot resist the temptation of the bottle while it stands before him.

Knowing that liquor can be found, and that he can find it, and being under the control of the most ferocious of evil spirits, he rushes madly and blindly into all the ills that are in wait for him. Deprived of his stimulus, the morbid function demanding it abates, while appropriate medicine and a return to self-possession complete the cure.

It has been computed that in Ohio there are fifty thousand drunkards, and it has been asked, with a sneer and an air of triumph, what are to be the dimensions of your asylum? The same question was presented when your lunatic and blind asylums were projected. But as a large number require our aid, shall we refuse it to all? Because we have a mountain to climb, will we forever remain in the vale? Shall the angel of mercy fold her wings, or the spirit of religion droop its head, in consequence of the unbounded wickedness of men? Shall church doors be closed against those who would seek the better life, because they are not sufficiently large to accommodate, at any one time, all those who need the holy influences of the Gospel?

Fifty thousand drunkards! Shall we look upon the scenes of misery they create — the homes they make desolate — the poverty-stricken women and children that go about like gaunt, grim specters, and turn away with indifference and disgust, uttering only the sentiment, all this comes from drunkenness?

Is it not enough that you see, daily, some noble form reeling, and some bright intellect obscured, to rouse your sympathies and best energies? Then, if it were possible, bring all these scenes of havoc

and wo together, and if every cord of your soul is not drawn to its utmost tension, you are a thousand times less than a man.

If the cholera were to appear in your midst, spreading dismay among the people, would you, like a trembling coward, fold your arms, and exclaim, "I can do nothing: it will be of no use to try?"

It has been gravely asserted, that to create asylums for inebriates is to offer them a premium to drink. Strange argument to have originated with an eloquent temperance lecturer. To what have all his appeals been directed? To the reclamation of the intemperate. Will we say to him, as a discouragement, your word-painting is a premium to drink? You sketch the man, with his stupid, bloated visage, as a premium to drink. You describe his dilapidated cabin, as the abode of squalid misery and want, as a premium to drink. You throw him into the kennel with the hounds, or into the sty with the pigs, as a "premium to drink."

Will we say that of six hundred thousand persons in the United States who have taken the pledge, four hundred and fifty thousand had broken it, and that the pledge was "a premium to drink?" No. We shall cast no such reproaches; for all efforts to stay the progress of intemperance are commendable.

The temperance lecturer enforces his appeals upon the minds of those who can still think, and who have not lost all self-control. An asylum is designed for the reclamation of those who cannot reclaim themselves.

What, a man become a drunkard that he may be entitled to a place in an asylum? *Preposterous!* Will men induce inflammation of the brain, chest, stomach or joints—will they fall down precipices, throw themselves under locomotives, provoke blows upon the head, gashes with a bowie-knife, or deep stabs with a stiletto, for no other purpose than to become the inmate of a hospital? The State has erected an edifice with large, airy apartments for the accommodation and comfort of the blind; but, who would willingly lose his sight and grope his way in thick darkness to secure a permanent home?

Efforts are being made to cultivate a sort of instinct in the idiot, to make of him, at least, a creature of imitation, and the object may be highly commendable, for humanity without mind is a most pitiable spectacle; but who would willingly assume the character and relations of the imbecile to obtain shelter and protection during the remainder of his days? I have heard of a poor inebriate, houseless and friendless, who committed theft with a hope that he would

receive a just penalty for his offense, and that a long exclusion from temptation would enable him to recover from his malady. He was willing to suffer shame, imprisonment, degradation, every thing that would release him from an enemy which had deprived him of his manhood and steeped his soul in bitterness and woe. Say not, then, that in providing for the reclamation of the drunkard, he will be confirmed in his habits.

Those who look to law rather than facts, oppose the association of inebriety with disease, on the ground, that crime would necessarily go unpunished. With the enactment and enforcement of law, in the discussion of medical subjects, we have nothing to do. If our views of disease do not fit the law, or the law should not naturally apply to it, we should not be held responsible. The public must look for a more appropriate source than the medical profession, for protection against crime. If drunkenness be in truth a disease, we should say so, leaving the consequences, in a legal point of view, to be controlled by others.

It is no part of my object on this occasion to present to you a plan for future action. The general statement may be made, however, that the actual cost of sustaining a State asylum for inebriates would be almost nominal. Indeed, there seems to be no good reason why it should not become a source of revenue. There were twenty-eight hundred applications for admission in the Binghampton asylum, N. Y., while its walls were in progress. This large number comprised men and women from all the walks of life; and the institution could have been filled at once with patients willing to pay almost any sum to be cured of their fearful malady. So it would be in Ohio.

Again, each county in the State might connect with its infirmary, an asylum for inebriates, with but little additional expense; and the cost of keeping and restoring them to health, would be less than is now paid for their arrest, trial and punishment. And then we should have the unspeakable delight in knowing, that we had rescued the fallen, and secured to them their true position in society.

What objection can be urged to the passage of a law requiring one, given to intemperance, to be placed under guardianship? If he is in possession of property, it can be thus preserved. If, at any time, he should lose his self-control, he can be properly disposed of before he runs into excess; and if his situation should require it, he could be at once subjected to the necessary cure.

The sick are always willing to be cured, and especially of a disease which renders them not only useless to themselves and families, but a burden and nuisance to the public. If we should, at this moment, see a man in imminent peril, from inattention or mishap, we would be prompt and active in his rescue. Let us not then turn a deaf ear and refuse aid to the drunkard. Think how many of our own profession have been decoyed and ensnared. Think of dear friends who have fallen, and may yet fall. Remember that we, too, are fallible. Let us be true to ourselves by being true to those who demand our sympathies and best-directed efforts.

There is no teacher capable of giving a more practical direction to the mind than experience. And yet, with the living, speaking, painful examples before us during our whole lives, we are but just opening our minds to a practical recognition of the fact, that drunkenness is disease. Having obtained a true solution of the nature of intemperance, let our next efforts be in giving a proper direction to public sentiment.

I need not present any appeals to this audience for aid in the prosecution of the good work which has been feebly, yet cheerfully, advocated.

Take the crude suggestions which have been hastily thrown out, and elaborate them to some useful purpose. If they are not conclusive to your minds, allow me to say, in bitterness of spirit, there is not one — no, not one — who may not refer to striking examples.

How often has the father, after days or weeks of debauch, fallen upon knees of repentance, and with big tears flowing down his cheeks, asked to be forgiven! How often has he prayed God to bear witness of the rectitude of his intentions, and with a fearful oath declared he would die — die the death of the suicide — rather than suffer such remorse, and bring such shame and misery on his family; yet where, and what was he, ere another month had made its circuit? Alas! where, and what was he?

How often has the noble boy, the stay and hope of his widowed mother, been prostrate on a bed of sickness, from the inroads of intemperance upon his yet impressive frame! How often, at noon-day, when the light of heaven came, as it were, to render more visible his sinfulness, and, at night, when all was still but his own beating heart, has he resolved, and re-resolved, that never more should the liquid fire be mingled with the current of his blood!

And then, notwithstanding the soft hand of affection had been

often laid upon his burning brow, and tender, anxious care had been bestowed upon him, his first strong impulse was to drink to feed the flame that had not been quenched.

I need not inquire, how often has the weak, vibrating will yielded to the temptation?

When you reflect on these, and a thousand other facts equally strong, we feel assured that you will direct your thoughts to habitual drunkenness as a disease, and your efforts to the establishment of asylums for its cure.







