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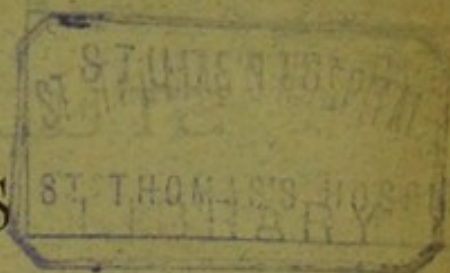
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# PROCEEDINGS



OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF INEBRIETY.



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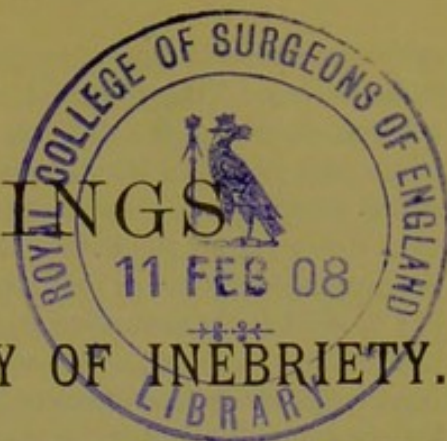
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PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF INEBRIETY.



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*This Society will not be responsible for the opinions and statements of any contributor to this Journal, unless these have been endorsed by the Council.*

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ANNUAL MEETING.

11 CHANDOS STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.

*Tuesday, July 10, 1900.*

The Quarterly General Meeting was held here this day, at which Dr. W. Lauzun-Brown gave a lecture on "Toleration as a Factor in the Etiology of Inebriety."

Dr. Harry Campbell occupied the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read by the Hon. Secretary and duly confirmed.

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TOLERATION  
OF  
WINES, BEERS, AND SPIRITS, CONSIDERED IN REFER-  
ENCE TO THE ETIOLOGY OF INEBRIETY.

BY

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In a lecture given before this Society in January, 1898, I pointed out that up to very recent days it had been the aim of philosophers and physicians when called upon to deal with the question of inebriety to fit the drinker to drink without harm, to produce immunity from wine troubles, and failing that to find means to remedy the unhappy condition which excessive indulgence in wines, beer, or spirits produces.

Their observation, like our own, had taught them that all individuals were not similarly influenced by the wine cup; that some could drink any quantity



without harm, and that others were injured by light draughts and had to drink with caution. They observed, as we do, that with alcohol as with any other substances, wine had a different action according to whether the individual was in a state of health or disease, and thus we find Hippocrates, Galen, and Aretæus laying down very different rules for taking wine in a state of health than they gave for the sick. Thus, Hippocrates tells those whose strength is impaired by fatigue "to take a cheerful glass once or twice, but not to excess," but to the sick he prescribes "as much as can be measured by three fingers" as a diuretic in dropsy. In modern language these differences are rather indiscriminately spoken of under the term "toleration." Therapeutically speaking the term "toleration" is restricted to diseased conditions in which an unusual power of resisting the usual action of any substance is manifested. In this sense "toleration" to the action of wines and spirits is well known in illness. Thus in erysipelas a man of 72 took a bottle of brandy daily for seven days without intoxication, and a lying-in woman suffering from hæmorrhage consumed a bottle of brandy in three hours without intoxication. Typhoid delirium has ceased after twelve ounces of brandy and the patient was calm and quiet. In collapse from hæmorrhage large quantities tend to bring back the body to its normal state. Mr. Hyde Salter gives large doses of brandy in asthma. It arrests ague, and a child in fever has been given large doses without any intoxicating effect whatever.

The effect therefore differs with the conditions of the body. It also differs according to the complexity of the liquor administered, and wine is especially a complex substance, and acts very differently on different persons.

One point of serious importance in prescribing wine is the use it has already been made of in the present illness and the former habits of the patient. It is certain that the peasants, as related by Bernardin, who in twenty-four hours could drink a cask containing 175 bottles of wine, and a savant who prescribe it to others but could himself never taste that article without getting colic, vomiting, and fever, must be treated with very different doses. The quality of the wine has also to be taken into consideration. It has been demonstrated beyond the reach of doubt that port, Madeira and sherry each contain one-fifth to one-quarter their bulk of alcohol, and yet different wines, although containing the same proportion of absolute spirit, will be found very considerably to vary in their intoxicating powers. The conclusion must, therefore, be drawn that alcohol exists in wine in a far different condition from what we know of it in a separate state. No doubt can any longer be entertained upon the subject; and the fact of the difference of the effect produced by the same bulk of alcohol, when presented to the stomach in different states, is to be explained on the supposition that in wine alcohol exists in combination with its extractive matter, in consequence of which it is incapable of exerting its full effects before it becomes altered in its properties, or, in other words, partially digested, and this view of the subject may be fairly urged in explanation of the fact that the intoxicating effects of the same wine are liable to vary in degree in the same individual, from the peculiar state of his digestive organs at the time of its potation.

It is, therefore, highly necessary that physicians should devote attention to the composition of wines and spirits, and clearly understand that alcohol is not the only ingredient which may modify the individual toleration of these beverages.



It is not to the action of alcohol pure and simple that all the distressing symptoms of over-indulgence in liquor are due. Every alcohol may combine to form certain bodies known as ethers, some of which have a most powerful and frequently beneficial action in aiding in the rapid diffusion into the system of the alcohol, and in the case of brandy give it its most valuable characters. Although on the subject of the action of mixed alcoholic or other ethers, very little definite physiological knowledge is available, it is certain that some of them are powerful narcotics, capable of producing narcosis of a deep and prolonged character, others such as "acetal," causing congestion of the head, sickness, and vomiting, and the spirituous liquor which contains such bodies will soon give the beholder pathological evidence of their deleterious and harmful properties if they are employed for any length of time or in any great quantity. Sometimes ethereal salts are formed—salts of organic radicals corresponding in chemical formation to salts of the alkalies. Several of these substances develop spontaneously, and in case of bad forms of alcohol produce virulent poisons such as the "Formate of Ethyl," a body highly irritating to the throat and air passages, which produces violent muscular excitement. It is probably this body which is present in those spirituous liquors which cause people to quarrel. They feel elated with their superior power and strength, and wish to give illustration of the fact. Such a substance tends to cause vomiting and stupor, during which the person affected sits in a corner muttering, chattering, and gesticulating, but in a drowsy and lethargic condition. In other cases, when "Acetate of Methyl" is developed in spirituous liquids it is apt to produce stupor without muscular excitement, and the person who indulges in liquids containing small traces of these potent and poisonous ethereal salts may be detected sitting quietly in a corner with his head dropping on his chest, quarrelling with no one, taking only a drowsy interest in what is passing around him.

It is astonishing to most people how such pernicious liquids can really be permitted to be sold under the name of brandy. The process of mixing the evil with the good and selling at a high rate a spurious, sophisticated and adulterated article is, with a grim sarcasm, described under the term "doctoring." The shamelessness of these adulterators in so denominating their nefarious practices is apparent. The doctor, by the judicious application of drugs which will act upon some flagging organ to increase its action, or will restrain another organ from overwork which personal and individual conditions have imposed upon it, is adding a substance to the human body which is calculated to *improve* its condition. But the "wine doctor" takes the good brandy and deliberately poisons it before the eyes of the whole world, and with the meekness and craft of the pernicious quack hands it over for gold to his brother dealers, to rob and poison honest men.

As a rule, analysts confine themselves to estimating the quantity of alcohol in the various brands, mentioning that they contain certain mineral matters and a group of more or less important items under a general heading of "Extractives," regarding which the analytical chemist never has much to say, except that among extractives there may be, occasionally, mineral phosphates, tannates, or other powerful materials. The analytical chemist usually indicates concerning a wine the amount of acidity or sugar which is relatively present in the fluid. Thus the presence of tartaric acid characterises wines like Sauterne, Hock, Chianti, certain brut or dry champagnes, and is estimated



relatively as varying from 1.05 per cent. to the point of neutrality. It is on these analyses that modern etiologists and some pathologists have based their several theories regarding the uses to which wines can be applied in health and in disease.

We make no attempt to describe the varied actions of every species of vintage, but it will serve a good purpose if we set down some of the chief points concerning the more useful forms of red wines as they are employed in this country. Therapeutically, the brands have little to distinguish them one from the other except fulness of body and aroma. High class Burgundies are distinguished by an increased percentage of alcohol, an absence of sugar, and a low percentage of tannin. They are well fitted for convalescence, for fevers, and other acute affections, and are superior to all other wines in cases of anæmia, general debility, feeble development, and in certain cases of mal-nutrition. This is probably due to the large quantity of mineral matters contained in these wines in the most readily assimilable form. To persons requiring iron, cod liver oil, and chalybeate tonics as a matter of routine it is found that two or three glasses of Burgundy, if it can be tolerated without discomfort, will form a most excellent help in such cases by tending to stimulate weakened physical powers. These wines are especially suitable for excitable and highly nervous people. The sedative influence of the best Burgundies frequently saves the physician the necessity of administering far more dangerous narcotics in the shape of chloral, opium, and bromides, to avert sleeplessness.

In consideration of the question of toleration saccharine constituents play an important part in the bodily economy, and fall to be considered in relation to gout, dyspepsia, and other disorders. The acidity of claret may be of such a character as to be either highly injurious or highly beneficial to the individual consumer. The quantity of tannic acid, for example, and the salts of potash and lime contained in the claret play an important part as alteratives or tonic agents. The peculiarity of wines, however, depends more on subtle essences—the compound ethers, formed from chemical changes which the juice of the grape undergoes during primary fermentation. The analytical chemist fails us at this point. His reagents must give place to the physiological action of the wines on the palate, on the digestive organs, or on the nervous system. As a result the figures deducible from a chemist's analysis are no index to how a particular wine will be tolerated.

In bilious dyspepsia, which so many people suffer from in middle life, the tannin of the red wines tends to its great advantage.

On account of its strength, port wine is classed among the liqueur wines. Experience shows, however, that it is apt to disagree with some individuals more so than sherry, which also belongs to this class of wines (spirituous). To this statement, as to any other statement in medicine, many exceptions, of course, occur; but port wine is far more apt with some people to disorder the head and stomach, and to create constipation, than sherry. It is popularly supposed that port wine is more strengthening than other wines, and on that account, although it is not mentioned in the *Pharmacopœia*, is more frequently prescribed for medical purposes. On account of its astringency, it is particularly adapted for cases that are attended with a relaxed condition of bowels, and its action is strengthened by the addition of a tablespoonful of good brandy.

In so-called "thin-blooded" people alcohol is necessary in the majority of



cases, but it should be given in a form that will exert the maximum amount of good influence upon appetite and digestion.

We have known persons who have employed port wine almost as a specific in certain cases. A medical man who seldom drinks anything employs a glass of port to ward off an incipient cold, and although exceedingly prone to nasal catarrh, he always manages by this treatment, if taken in time, to avoid it. Sir Samuel Wilks mentions the case of a lady who on her shopping days suffered from severe headache after the fatigue of shopping. This was immediately relieved by a glass of good port wine. The lady, however, absolutely refused to take port under any other circumstances, saying she did not wish to make so good a thing too common. Many other instances of the use of good port might be mentioned, but the principal object of the consumer should be to secure a really sound article.

Champagne is the ladies' wine, by reason of its delicacy, its aroma, its refreshing, cooling, and stimulating action—the wine for nimble wits. It produces the greatest effect on the largest amount of absorbing surface at the least possible expenditure of nervous organisation, or of the delicate organisms of digestion. Sparkling wines have all a refreshing effect on account of the large amount of carbonic acid they contain, and in impaired digestion are frequently more useful than any other form, on account of the readiness and ease with which they are absorbed, and among all effervescing or brisk wines, the champagnes, not though the strongest, are certainly the best. They are the least noxious, even when drunk in large quantities; their effect is speedy, on account of the diffusibility of alcohol when in contact with carbonic acid. In its effects its action differs widely from that of any other form of alcoholic beverage; it produces vivacity, liveliness of an agreeable character, and the effects pass quickly but gradually off without subsequent exhaustion or any feeling of discomfort.

Sherry is the only wine which has received the sanction, signature, and seal not only of chemists and druggists, but of physicians of all classes, and of the highest medical bodies in the country, as a menstruum for the administration of certain valuable drugs.

At one time (1824) it was attempted to substitute alcohol for Sherry in the preparation of certain medicines in which that wine had formerly been used. It could not be done with advantage, and the prescription of the more ancient and in some respects more expert physicians was adhered to. Sherry wine is employed in making the wine of Aloes, Antimonial wine, the wine of Colchicum, Ipecacuanha wine, Opium wine, and Rhubarb wine of the British Pharmacopœia. Sherry is preferred on account of its flavour, its tonic, and ethereal properties, and because it is a suitable solvent for the active principles of certain drugs. Sherry differs from other wines in containing, as an ingredient, tartaric acid in place of tartrate of Potash.

In the process of maturing Sherry the organic salts of Potash are gradually developed and increased. This addition of Potash salts to the ordinary food supply of man has a valuable effect in neutralising the excess of acids which are liable to be produced in the bodies of those who eat heartily of animal food, a procedure which has been alleged as a cause of gout. It has been ridiculously suggested that the lime salts held in solution in wines and beers are responsible for producing the hardening of the liver cells, so frequently mentioned by teetotal scientists as being due to the action of alcohol. The



fact is, that in man the potassium salts in soluble and assimilable form, act as an "alterative," by restoring what is known as the balance of salts in the system, and so far from being a factor in the production of liver disease, is in many instances the very thing required to prevent it.

It has been stated that in the Sherry districts of Spain the workmen employed in wine making consume about twelve pints of Sherry a day, and yet cirrhosis (liver disease) is unknown among them. This is only a further illustration of the need for examination into the statements made regarding the rôle performed by alcoholic beverages in bringing about liver or other diseases.

Sherry illustrates an important but too little recognised distinction which should be drawn concerning the action of the various forms of alcohol. The ethers appear to have a distinctive use in conditions known as cerebral and cardiac exhaustion. Everyone who has much mental work or protracted physical labour to perform, must suffer in some degree from one or other of these conditions. The action and benefit of wines containing large quantities of the aromatic ethers, is very different from those which contain less alcohol and less aromatic ethers. The ethers in fine old Sherry may amount to over '2 per cent., as against '04 per cent. in the newer kinds, the old Sherries having four or five times more, and more delicate and useful ethers, than the new. The action of wine containing a large percentage of ethers, as in the case of the Sherries, can best be observed in the diseases in which brain and heart exhaustion is most marked, as in the last stages of an attack of typhoid fever. In these cases Anstie correctly points out that from six to twelve ounces per day of fine old Sherry, given in divided doses at intervals of half an hour, affords the ideal stimulant required under the circumstances. It is surprising how rapidly this treatment restores strength and regularity to the heart's action and calms the nervous system so as to allow of sweet and restorative sleep.

But where the exhaustion is less marked the restorative action of a glass of Sherry is precisely the same, and many persons feel so greatly benefited by this wine that they are inclined to endorse somewhat too liberally all the virtues which Sir John Falstaff ascribed to it when he concluded, "If I had a thousand sons the first human principle I would teach them should be—to forswear thin potations, and to addict themselves to sack."

As applied to the action of wines, beers, and spirits, the question of "toleration" has to be considered in a much wider sense, if it has any bearing on the etiology of inebriety. These substances, so various and complex, are largely used by the healthy as a part of the ordinary dietary, and it is a matter of common observation that the action varies with the substances they contain, with the physical personality, vital activity of individuals, with the type, temperament, diathesis and idiosyncrasies, all of which modify the final action of the active substances in wine, beers, or spirits. Thus we have examples of persons who are apparently almost insusceptible to the action of alcohol, as in the well-known case of the Scotch laird Sir Patrick Murray of Auchtertyre, a bachelor who sometimes asked his good old butler John to take toddy with him after dinner. About one o'clock in the morning, John smiled to see his master embarrassed with his silver mug. "Ah John" said the laird "I see ye're laughing at me ye think I'm drunk, but I not, I just fatigued with drinking." The laird had more harm in his shoulder and arm from the weight of the jug than in his head from its contents.



On the other hand, I have personal knowledge of persons who are seized with nausea and vomiting if whisky, brandy, rum or gin are exposed in a room, and the workers in bonded stores have violent headaches from smelling liquors.

In considering the causes of these diversities they will be found to depend on many factors, other than those of the quality of the liquor, physical, racial, social, and constitutional.

It is with alcoholic beverages as with many other dietary articles, the toleration is greatly modified by constitutional considerations. No infant could tolerate beer to replace its milk diet, and milk itself becomes distasteful or even harmful to the adult except in small quantities. Beer is readily tolerated by the active, healthy, adolescent, until middle life when its action becomes embarrassing to the liver and some other beverage such as claret is substituted. But many well-known cases occur where the toleration is carried far beyond that point. The father of the House of Commons, Mr. Charrington, an advanced octogenarian, regularly drinks his pint of beer at dinner in the House of Commons, with advantage to his health. It is the strong who are most tolerant, and as maturity is passed the tendency to become more liable to the action of strong liquors is more marked, and it is the commonest matter to observe that smaller quantities produce greater results. Dr. Samuel Johnson had noticed this and he apportioned liquors in this order:—"claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes." Burke who heard him, said "let me drink claret for I love to be a boy," Johnson replied "certainly, I should like to drink claret too if it would bring me back to boyhood, but it neither makes men nor boys, you and I would be drowned in claret before it would have any effect upon us."

Sex plays an important part in determining "toleration" but is not nearly so important as its great bearing on other matters would lead one to suppose. Any evils which are evident in the male will be accentuated in the female, but no specifically new alcoholic phenomena are induced by femininity.

The question of how far tolerance is produced by ancestry resolves itself into one of up-bringing and early training. Children are less likely to develop pernicious habits of greed when taught habits of self-restraint in due time. It is said that Plato forbade wine until 18 years of age. On the other hand, modern physicians allege that delicate children might be strengthened, and puncheons of expensive cod-oil saved if at the age of 7 or 10 years clean tasting sub-acid claret tempted the unwilling appetite, and in acute diseases alcoholic beverages sometimes gives better results with children's diseases than with adults.

Much depends on the type of body. Some constitutions annihilate the potency of alcoholic beverages, others exaggerate it: just as some persons cannot take the smallest quantity of quinine, and through some defect or another a drop of atropine in the eye sometimes causes symptoms of poisoning which betray the presence of some structural peculiarity which renders the individual intolerant. It is the same with many persons who cannot take the smallest quantity of spirituous liquors, while other kinds are easily tolerated and helpful, and this condition may exist all through life. I know instances where men are intolerant of "gin" and can with safety take whisky, some who can take red wines who would be ill with white, persons who are ill after a glass of champagne but who can drink brandy without harm.



It seems to me, therefore, to be in a very large degree a question of the chemical structure of the various beverages which act on the unsuspecting individual and bring out whatever susceptibilities (congenital or transmissible) which may reside within.

It is a fallacy to classify, for purposes of study, wines of every brand, spirituous liquors of every denomination and beers of any brew under the generic term "alcoholic drinks" and then to discuss the question of the therapeutic action and toleration of these beverages as if they consisted of diluted pure alcohol. No human being ever drinks pure alcohol as a beverage.

A great deal has been spoken and written on the subject of the quantity of wine or spirits which can be taken by the healthy without dangerous consequences, and certain physicians have laid down very distinct rules regarding the quantity of alcohol which a man may safely consume in twenty-four hours. The quantity is set out between one and a half and two ounces, and the consumers are advised to take pains to find out for themselves precisely how much absolute alcohol each favourite beverage contains, and arrange their drinks accordingly; then, it is said, England will be drunken no longer, so long as each individual keeps within the two ounce alcoholic limit. This measure of human capacity was laid down in these latter days by Parkes, but in very uncertain terms. He said, "The question, 'what is excess' is not easy to answer, and will depend both on the composition of the beer and on the habits of life of those who take it"; and again in the case of wines he points out that "they contain several substances besides alcohol and ethers of greatest value as articles of diet, and the common experience of nations proves that the employment of wines in moderation is useful as well as agreeable." "Whether it is," he continues, "that the amount of alcohol is small, or whether the alcohol be itself in some way different from that prepared by distillation, it is certain that the moderate use of wine does not lead to those profound alterations of the molecular constitution of organs which follow the use of spirits even when taken largely. "After all," he says, "a point of this kind must be settled by individual experience." This, however, was laid down in the moral law long before Dr. Parkes's time. St. Luke also warned people to take heed of overcharging with drunkenness (Luke xxi. 24), and in the ancient Scriptures the prophets used their most sarcastic similes and metaphors against those who frequently overpassed their physiological capacity. "Yea," said Isaiah, "they are greedy dogs which can never have enough" (Isaiah lvi. 11-12). People who have acquired the habit of drinking intolerantly have also acquired the habit of attributing their indulgence to some personal or material influence, such as parents, wife, husband; the teetotaller blames the proximity of the public-house and many of them blame the doctor—the *pis aller* upon which to fix all infirmities of noble or ignoble stomachs.

In wine-drinking countries the quantities consumed would take us far beyond the two ounce regulation limit of physiological liberty, which has been so largely accepted by physicians, who have endorsed Dr. Parkes's *obiter dicta*.

If I take an unsophisticated nigger from the Aruwimini Forest and a West Highland shepherd and dose them both with whisky I have the nigger a gibbering idiot before Donald, the shepherd, has begun to warm to his work, or to settle what particular brand he is honouring.

In my experiment on the nigger I tested the natural capability of a human being to withstand the deleterious effect of alcohol—habit eliminated—in the



other I tested the immunity gained by the shepherd through a long and regular course of habituation.

"Toleration" is one of the "excellencies," if not one of the "virtues," and is best involved in co-ordination and company with its sister "excellencies." When an excellency of any kind developes among a people precociously and out of line and accord with the march and progress of surrounding advances it is ever in a perilous position, and very liable to extinction. Thus "toleration" has ever shown itself, in the matter of beverages, most developed, rational, and helpful in a state of general civilization where the tendencies and energies of men fall into a state of reciprocal balance. The history of the individual in this respect is the history of the race, and of particular races. An erroneous notion is abroad that certain races possess no "toleration" while others do. Certain races exhibit, as a fact, no resisting power to certain beverages. But if this be taken to mean that one race is very appreciably less gifted with that natural faculty which developes in the individual a power of immunity I must ask for proof. The most immune of men, was as a child, easily overcome by a beverage, which he can imbibe as a man by the bumper. So of nations and races. No savage race normally possesses active "tolerative" powers. Circumstances have never permitted its acquirement. But no savage race can be proved to be without the conditioning forces on which toleration is based, development only is lacking. Savages are in that political and social stage which corresponds to childhood in the individual. They are in a state of civilization, or rather of nature, where there is no proper co-ordination of the energies of the individual. Every activity tends to exhibit itself at *impromptu* periods and to *excess*. Their joy is the extravagant jubilation of children, their sorrow the fanatical despair of the maniac, their religion, even when not native but Christian, an evanescent outburst of ecstasy, mixed with the jubilative tarnish of the music hall. That they should exhibit no alcoholic toleration is only part and parcel of their general natural and undeveloped condition. It is no more really and truly racial than the want of clothes. Civilize them and they will take to clothes, they will tone down their extremes of joy and sorrow, and though they were in what may be called the "bout" stage of existence when first observed, they will now be found living in the "tolerant," and bringing their drinking habits into line and accord with their other acquired excellencies of moderation. The "bout and orgie" separated by long periods of enforced temperance, will now be superseded by an everyday and moderate indulgence in stimulating beverages. This is, indeed, the history of every civilized nation or people at present existing. They are savages who have become civilized. Among much that they have acquired toleration against theft, evil speaking, murder, vanity and lust, they have also acquired a degree of immunity against drink, and to-day ninety-eight per cent. of the civilized world are sober because they are "tolerant."

A small residue of alcoholic weakness due to race may be discovered which may fairly be set down to the inferiority of one race to another, but it is maintained that on the whole, *ceteris totis que paribus*, races are very much the same as to this natural faculty, and that the evolution of this natural faculty along with other capabilities it is that produces toleration, which is chiefly due to the individual endowment, and presents the same inexplicable presences and absences which characterise everything individual, and which like other individual capacities is conditioned so enormously and in such abundant variety



by circumstances of time, clime, and national pursuits and habits generally—purely external considerations.

1. *Natural Toleration*.—We have thus first what one may call natural toleration—the natural, unsophisticated power of the individual to stand alcohol—which in most persons is about as highly developed as is a child's natural power to climb the *Pons Asinorum* or demonstrate the *Binomial Theorem*.

2. *Acquired Toleration*.—We have secondarily what I may call "toleration proper," or that acquired power of resistance and immunity gained through a course of habituation to alcoholic beverages. Up to a certain period of life this power, by progressive doses, will increase till it reach a maximum, after which any attempt to trespass beyond will lead to pernicious bodily and mental effects.

3. *Therapeutic Toleration*.—There is also the power of toleration produced by exceptional circumstances, such as disease, and which is of an evanescent and abnormal character, though better known to the profession in its characteristics than is the more general toleration educed by habit—a condition already dealt with.

#### *Due to External Circumstances.*

Some people and nationalities are in the "Infantile" stage—the "Bout and Orgie" stage—the stage of "External Control," their faculty of toleration as yet undeveloped or yet imperfectly developed. Others are in the "Adolescent" stage or "tolerant" stage—the community as a whole having advanced in self-control, and among other faculties which have been strengthened and developed by prudent exercise being that of the power to resist the effects of liquors.

This division is also apparent on a smaller scale in each individual nationality. Among savage races, or civilized races passing through some *lowering crisis*\* of their national life, it may be that the "bout or orgie" stage is all but invariable in the individual, but in civilization, as is amply evidenced in other aspects of human progress, something akin to the "bout and orgie" stage always survives, it may be as a relic from the untutored and unrestrained state of savagery, or due to the congenital absence of any faculty capable of evolving "toleration." If 98 per cent. of our British population are tolerant, two per cent, neither are nor ever will be.

As regards the physical or cosmic causes conditioning "toleration" and making either for or against it, we are face to face with the effects of race, climate, and the dependent facts of the great primitive occupations of the nomadic, pastoral, agricultural, or sea-faring life. Race, if not founded on, is certainly much modified by climate, and climate is the chief determining factor in the food supply, and in deciding the fruit from which the stimulating beverages are to be made.

All savage races are without "toleration" for the same reason that children are. They live in the "bout and orgie" stage, their faculty of toleration suffering from want of cultivation steadily and prudently, even as their other faculties. Some people adduce the Jew as an instance of a people tolerant by nature, *i.e.*, race. Those who know the Jew well will smile at the assumption.

\* *E.g.*, Italy, Greece, Poland, Iceland, Spain.



The Biblical Jew, if that narrative is to be relied on, was very far from "tolerant" of old. If he is more so now it is "acquired toleration" that now distinguishes him and it is in no sense racial. The hardships of his life among the poorer classes, the good feeding and almost universal participation in wines or spirits, even in the case of girls, among the better classes renders them very tolerant, when such toleration is helped by the general prudence evolved by a sense of living together in a self denying community. But the isolated Jew everywhere, and whole communities of them in certain countries, display no *natural* or *racial* immunity against alcohol, and the orgies of some Hamburg diamond merchants as they go and come to this country across the North Sea, make it very questionable if even the *ACQUIRED* power of toleration of the Jews is not vastly exaggerated. While no race seems to have very much to boast of over another in *natural* endowment, circumstances of a physical nature bring out great inequalities. In the northern temperate regions the peoples, as in every other aspect of economic life, so also in their drinking habits, their powers of toleration, and the variety of drinks in use, are the most varied. These regions are by far the most populous and their peoples the most energetic. They naturally present most individual cases of alcoholic ruin, just as more white swans are shot than black ones. The toleration evidenced among peoples of the temperate regions is by far the highest, no matter what intoxicant be taken as our test.

The prudent repression of all habits leading to excess, the careful cultivation of the human powers all round, and an enlarged moral sense help very largely to further such progress in toleration and temperance, and to place addiction to spirituous liquors upon a more balanced basis—free as the peoples are from the enforced abstinence of the Frigid Zone, and the "bouts and orgies" of the non-habituated and therefore non-tolerant denizens of the tropics.

It is pure ineptitude to ask the New Zealander or the Dahomian to control his appetite for liquor while both are devoid of control in every other matter. Toleration of spirituous liquors is only one of many virtues which are gregarious and can be cultivated only in groups. Some people cannot cultivate temperance or toleration just for the reason they cannot cultivate Christian charity owing to a lop-sided development of the virtues. That savages have great powers of toleration, however, even of a natural kind may be shown by their powers of recuperation from a "bout," the effects vanishing rapidly in open air and vigorous life. Further, the conditions under which liquor has destroyed any "native" race will always be found to include "vile liquor" drunk under conditions of home and dress which lead to the rapid spread of pulmonary and other disease.

The nomadic life, exemplified on the great plateau and steppes of the world, presents us with another example of the "bout" stage. In such societies there is little ordinary recourse to alcohol or stimulants and the power of acquired toleration is small. Bodily vigour is, however, at its highest and the climatic conditions of pure air, and liberal diet generally induce much natural resisting power to stimulants. However, so much is "toleration" in its full power the child of "habituation" that when nomadic tribes do resort to stimulants as at fairs, feasts, visits to the one town of the district, their indulgence assumes, and assumes purposely as well as necessarily the "bout and orgie" stage.

The pursuit of a sea-faring life is another proof of the use of acquired toleration. What liquor is doled out on ship-board is in most cases no more than



what is popularly called "refreshment" and will produce "toleration" only up to this very limited point. Take along with this the repression necessarily resulting from life on ship-board of many other faculties and powers of the sailor, and we readily see that however much Jack may be civilized, yet "Jack-a-shore" is more frequently a mere child as regards "toleration" and "inhibition" and takes rank with both child and savage in this respect in regard to toleration of alcoholic beverages. He is in the "bout or orgie" stage of development, and like most in that stage enjoys the one redeeming benefit of speedy recuperation. Yet even hard work and bracing breezes will not make up for use, and many a true tale and stirring fiction teaches us how in mutiny time a crew's temporary superiority soon passes back to the legitimate officers when the first "keg" of rum has been broached.

From travellers' reports we are frequently asked to believe that one and the same race are at once the most sober, and the most drunken of men. To one traveller the coffee drinking Lapp of winter is a paragon of sobriety, to another this same Lapp seen in summer inbibing his grain brandy in the small coast town is an irreclaimable drunkard. A real "Stockholmer" is very rarely seen drunk, and so this hardest of drinkers is held up to us as a pattern of a very temperate man.

In the modern pastoral districts wrought by capital we have a youth hardy and abstinent, fortified by rude surroundings and abundance of food, and such health giving conditions further enhanced by vigorous work in the open air. But habituation is generally absent in the case of the isolated squatter and his men, and consequently to break the monotony or to attend to markets, we find intermittent assemblages at the Hotel for the district, or in the district market town, where a purposed "bout" is entered upon, toleration being conspicuous for its absence, but speedy recuperation even after a week's orgie being marked. Contrast this with the Highland Shepherd's endurance on a Scottish hill-side where every day he treats himself to a generous dole, and on market days carries his two bottles of whisky with the firm air of a guardsman on parade.

There is no such thing as "drunkenness" with such "tolerant" people except as something exceptional. Drinking, even heavy drinking, is looked upon more as an incident in and adjunct to a heavy business in social life rather than anything special, or demanding caution. Such a condition is induced by almost all outdoor work, more especially of the "labourer" or "navvy" type. In certain of these classes toleration is limited, but the period of collapse is short—especially so among farm labourers. But while work is going on, the limit of toleration in these classes as in navvies is not easily reached. Here alcohol seems to act physiologically and to spend its energy simply in building up the waste entailed by work, and despite the statistics of gangs of men kept working on coffee beating the beer drinkers at labour, it is quite certain that the disabling effect of liquors on a navvy at work is almost *nil*, and he has no means short of enormous expense of arriving at his limit of toleration.

When we leave the bracing conditions of fresh air, outdoor work, and rude liberal country fare, we have abstracted one great set of conditions making for a high power of toleration. Among the indoor mechanical crafts, despite the vastly superior mental powers they demand, we find the average engineer of only limited toleration, the engine-shop man of still less, and in the lowest class of mechanical engineering there is little opportunity of gauging the



worker's acquired toleration, as generally speaking he drinks only when "dead tired," and uses alcohol more as a medicinal stimulant than as a beverage. But despite the merely medium powers of acquired toleration among engineers, drunkenness is as a rule not common—the mental powers and social prudence supplementing the deficiency of resistance though frequently trespassing on their powers of toleration.

When we come to pursuits carried on under hygienic conditions, still more artificial and adverse, we learn how much toleration is due to helpful external conditions. In mill-girls, lace makers, laundresses, &c., toleration is largely repressed as habituation acts on a system lowered in its resisting power by bad air, sloppy food, and undue hours. These as frequently as not are further aggravated by a too early indulgence in spirituous liquors during an ill-nourished youth.

There is also a conditioning power of intellectual pursuits in the development of "toleration." In this consideration we complete the circle of investigation we began by considering toleration as a therapeutic abnormality, then as a natural faculty conditioned in its development by the thousand-and-one factors operative among external conditions, till now we come back to the individual as such again—this time in his normal condition, and note how "toleration" is modified by the *mens sana et operosa in corpore sano*, "the labouring mind as opposed to the labouring body."

To gain any great degree of "toleration" in a life dedicated to intellectual pursuits, apart of course from the invariable *sine quâ non* of the original faculty, there is necessary here more than perhaps in any other case, an abstinence during the formative period of youth from all stimulants in conjunction with generous diet and manly exercise. No great intellectual worker can be cited who was a liberal drinker before the age of twenty unless such freaks of genius as did all their work in the early flash of a shortened existence.\* The toleration educed in early manhood, and when in later life drink is indulged in, will then be found, generally speaking, to be in exact proportion to the early training, and in consonance with the natural type of body and temperament, and fostered materially by the depth and difficulty of the mental tasks attacked. Yet here as elsewhere, the great factor in toleration is the outcome of a temperate, vigorous mind and well regulated body and will. Brilliant, sparkling writers are frequently erratic men, with the dash, fervour, and *élan* of primitive peoples, and in drinking are prone to exhibit the characteristics of such, indulging in bouts and *symposia*, which is but the civilized term for a savage survival. Such exhibit but small powers of acquired toleration and their periodic outbursts are generally more severe than in the case of others punctuated by periods of reaction, abstension, and gloom. Men of the highest intellectual endowment, on the other hand, dedicating their brains and pens to the greatest and gravest of problems, have exhibited an immunity to alcohol even when taken in enormous quantities little short of the miraculous.† If the active life be further associated with the mental as in the case of statesman, soldiers, engineers, contractors, where grave responsibilities necessitate promptitude of measures, great quantities of stimulants may be taken which present results merely incidental and scarcely discernible, such

\* E.g., Poe, Chatterton.

† Chaucer, Shakespere, Walpole, Johnson, Dryden, Herrick, Steele, Scott, took claret and port.



men generally living to a robust and genial old age.\* The alcohol in such cases seems to be diverted from its ordinary fields of attack, and to be readily and harmlessly, even profitably, consumed as fuel in energising the will to greater promptitude, and stimulating thought to speedier action. That some such diversion of the alcoholic stimulus to the aid of intellectual effort and to the relief of the bodily system as such does occur is evident from the power of animated conversation and intellectual intercourse to temporarily increase the standard of alcoholic immunity in the case of persons possessed of but little ordinary "toleration."

There is the "total abstinence" school, and there is the "purify 'em by poison" school, each claiming to have found in its doctrine the panacea for universal abstinence. Apart from the fact that both schools are guilty of the *great and unproved assumption that universal abstinence would be a benefit to society*, there is the question of the possibility of the one programme, and the question of the actual historical truth of the other. All experience of human tendencies and human necessities as well as of the intentions of nature as deduced from her cornucopœia of alcoholic gifts, together with the futility of all attempts to enforce total abstinence on any community however small, even on the family, go to prove that universal abstinence is the delusive dream of Utopians.

On the other hand those persons who hold that the sobriety of to-day is due to the drunkenness of yesterday, and that the action of alcohol promoted sobriety in a nation by compassing the death of all the wine drinkers, and leaving only the water drinkers, have first of all to point to any such nations or communities existent. They cannot point to any such. There are no water drinking communities except such as have not a sufficiency of grapes, grain, or gold.

Communities in all ages, in all places, and in all climes have invariably been to at least 90 per cent. of their population moderate drinkers and temperate men, and the fringe of drunkenness, which is at all times also only one special exhibition of human weakness, will as soon as stamped out in one generation reappear in another. The *petty minority* of drunkards will remain as permanent a feature of nations and communities as the *great majority* of temperate men, endowed with "toleration." The modern drinker is in a position of stable equilibrium which neither demands nor admits of change.

The British nation stands yet where it did among the forces of the earth for feats of arms in spite of an increasingly greater national consumption of alcoholic liquors. Sir Dyce Duckworth, with the sense and science characteristic of most of his utterances, maintains that the "best forces of civilisation, taking the lead in enterprise, literature, games, arts, and the highest moral tone in the world (he might have added consuming as much alcohol, *i.e.* beverages, as any other nation) is unaffected very materially by alcoholic habits.

A misleading argument to support the doctrine of alcoholic selection was that if the British workman was allowed to drink beer "without money and without price" he would never leave off until he had either killed himself or ruined the brewers and publicans. This is a libel on the workmen and simply an example of what kind of reaction follows restraint, but reaction would not last for ever, and even in the case of the individual working man would adjust itself in accordance with the higher instincts of the national character. People

\* *E.g.*, Sir John Fowler, Old Brassey, Bulloch, Arrol, Aird, Charrington, "Long John," the distiller who died a hercules at the age of ninety-two.



are seldom guilty of excess in what is their daily fare, and in countries where beer is cheapest and wine most plentiful, excessive drunkenness is at its minimum, and the conclusion seems to be that the very restrictions by which it is sought to make men sober, create a proneness to drunkenness. Indeed true temperance can only exist when it has become part and parcel of the individual or of the national life, and is absolutely incompatible with the lower forms of compulsion, whether they proceed from so-called temperance caucuses or are forced upon the nation by the interference of the legislature.

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## DISCUSSION.

Dr. Paramore expressed his belief that Dr. Brown was on a dangerous track. He did not admit that there was any more difference in the action of the various alcoholic liquors than there was between tweedledum and tweedledee. A lot of bunkum and humbug. Wine was a mocker and strong drink raging. His philosophy sounded very pleasant, but it lacked that old common sense which after all was the most uncommon thing met with nowadays. He thought that 98 per cent. moderate drinkers was a computation made without facts to back it up, and we must not be deceived by any such absurd and treacherous fallacy. He was down on those who backed up the use of drink. He had lived without it for 28 years and was in excellent health. He closed his warm and eloquent speech with a tribute to the memory of Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, who had nobly spent his life in the cause of temperance.

Mr. John Sandford Dyason, author of "The Chromatics of the Sky," said that the subject required the greatest balance of thought. He had never been a total abstainer, yet had enjoyed the very best of health from childhood, and was now 74 years of age. Looking back upon his experience of life, he thought a great deal might be said on both sides of the question.

Dr. Longhurst thought that as a scientific society we ought to consider any variations there might be in the action of spirituous liquors. He thought that the latest researches went to prove that alcohol and its compounds were injurious in their action, and that this was illustrated by experiments in the lecture given by Mr. Victor Horsley.

Dr. Heywood Smith looked on moderation as a compromise, and believed that the character of sentiment displayed by a man when under the influence of wine, could be changed by changing the wine he was drinking.

Dr. Morton said the subject was quite germane to the work of the Society, but that almost the only point on which he agreed with Dr. Brown was as to the different effects produced by different liquors. If Dr. Brown claimed, on the strength of some abnormal old men, that the free use of alcohol conduced to longevity, he certainly traversed that statement, and referred him to the statistics of insurance offices. In referring to the administration of brandy in post-partum hæmorrhage, he testified against its use, and said:—"I think it is bad both in theory and practice. Copious draughts of water are craved for, and do much more good." He thought that racial and individual tolerance were totally unallied and that the influence of sex was most striking, and had been passed over too lightly.



The chairman, Dr. Harry Campbell, complimented those who had taken part in the discussion and regretted that there was not time to speak on a subject so wide and important as that opened up by Dr. Brown's lecture. He would therefore reserve his criticism until he had an opportunity of studying the lecture in print, and call on Dr. Brown for his reply.

Dr. Brown replied briefly, saying that it was a matter of surprise to find that so much eloquence could be got up on cold water.

[ED.:—"A little humour now and then,  
Is relished by the wisest men."]

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#### FUTURE MEETINGS.

The next Quarterly Meeting will be held in the Rooms of the Medical Society of London, 11 Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W., on Tuesday, October 9, 1900, at 4 p.m., when a lecture will be given by Surgeon-Major Poole, M.D. Subject:—"Inebriety: a Crime or a Disease?"

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#### SPECIAL NOTICE.

Annual subscriptions became due on July 1st, 1900. Members and Associates who have not already paid are requested to remit to Mr. J. J. Smith, Secretary, Devon Lodge, 2 Alexandra Road, South Hampstead, London, N.W. Cheques crossed "London and County Bank, Paddington Branch."