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LICENSING &  
TEMPERANCE  
IN SWEDEN, NORWAY,  
AND DENMARK

EDWIN A. PRATT





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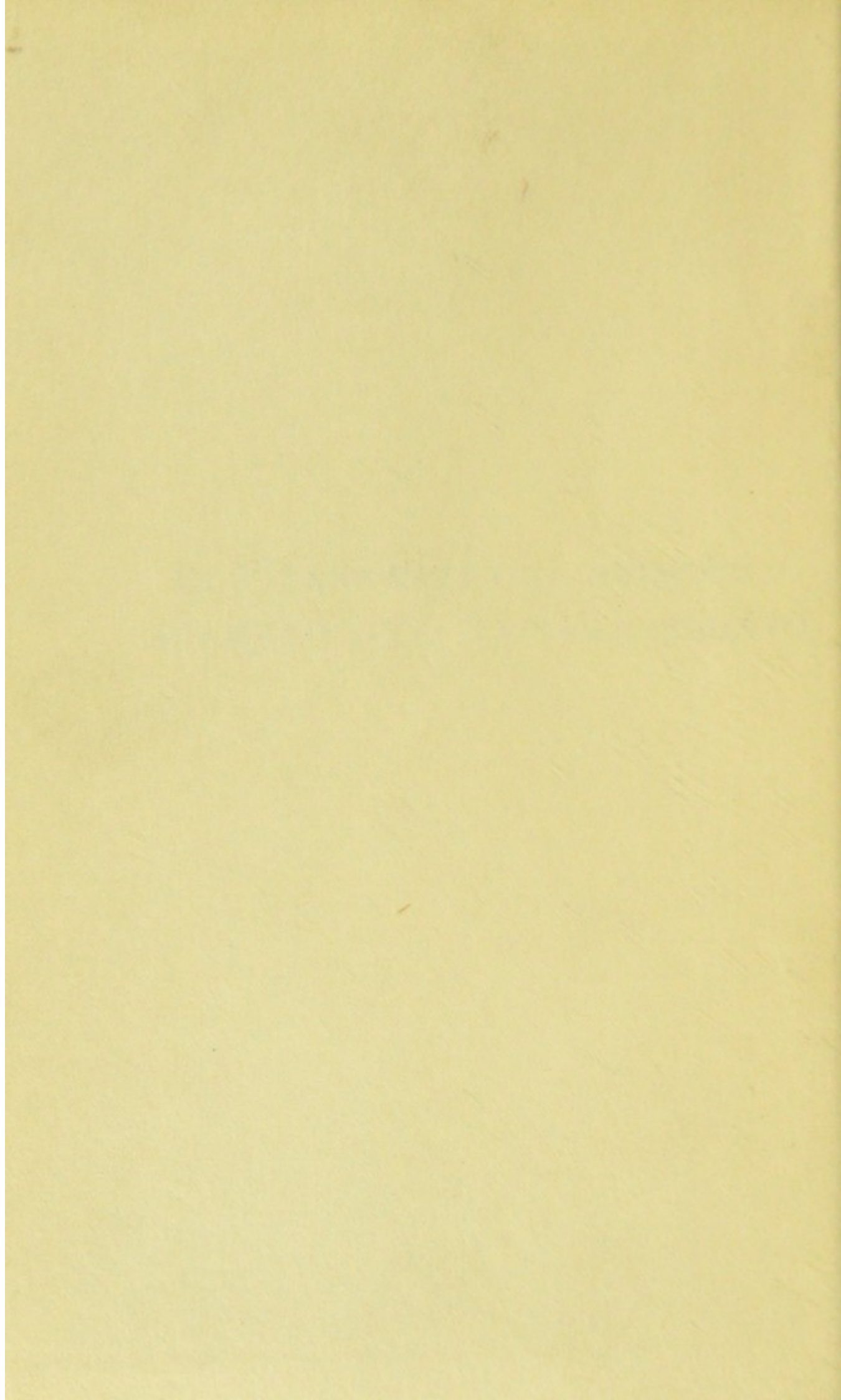


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LICENSING AND TEMPERANCE IN  
SWEDEN, NORWAY, AND DENMARK





# LICENSING AND TEMPERANCE

IN SWEDEN, NORWAY, AND  
DENMARK

BY EDWIN A. PRATT

AUTHOR OF 'THE TRANSITION IN AGRICULTURE,'  
'RAILWAYS AND THEIR RATES,' ETC.

LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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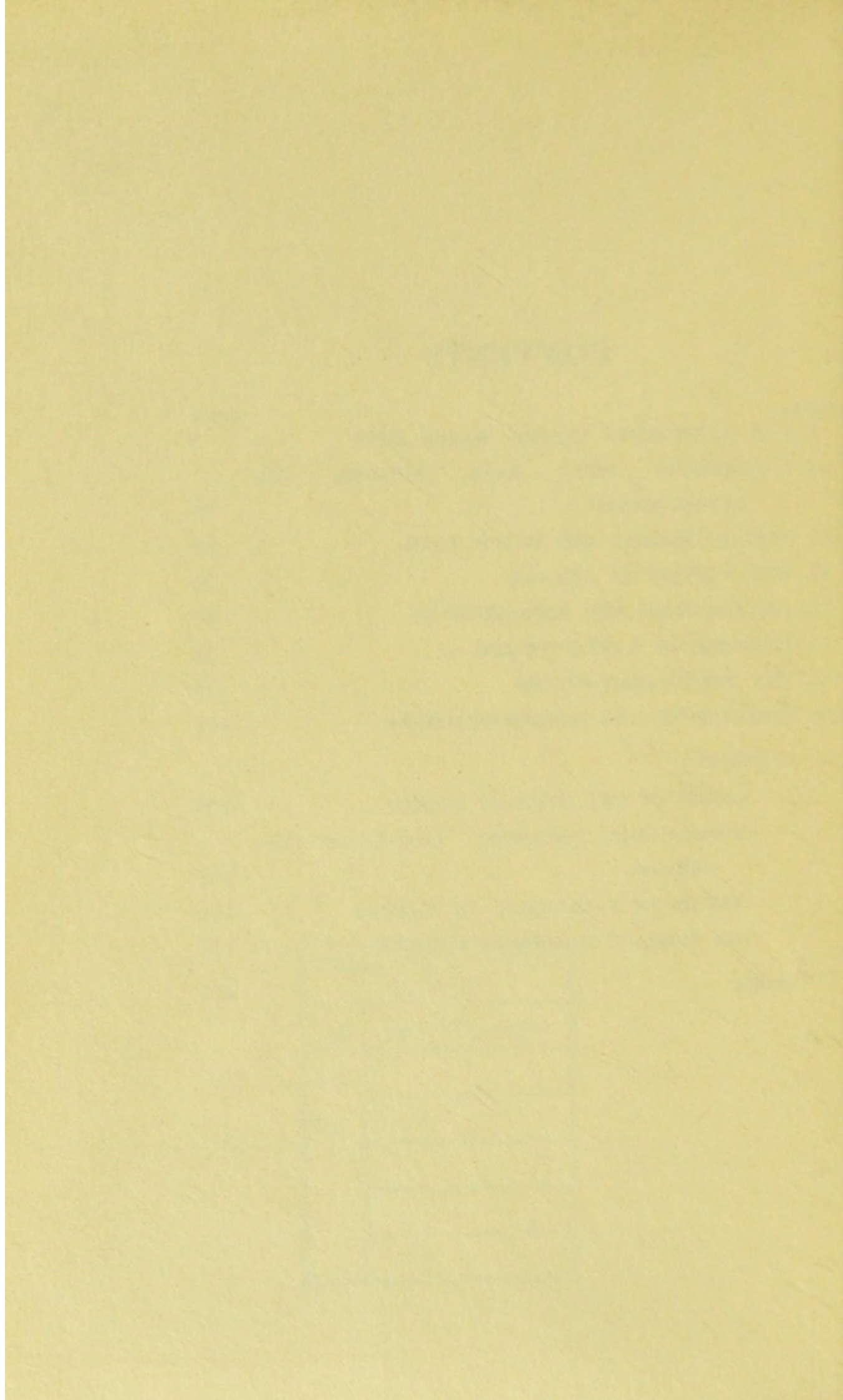
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## INTRODUCTION

THERE are two classes in Great Britain to whom the subject of licensing in Scandinavia has specially appealed : the 'Disinterested Management' party, who have thought they saw in an adaptation of the Gothenburg 'Company' System an effective method of controlling the consumption of intoxicants ; and the Municipal-Socialist party, who, without any idea of 'suppressing the liquor traffic,' would fain have the exploiting of it, with the view either of securing the profits, in order to apply them to municipal purposes or enterprises (especially when it is felt that the British ratepayer will not tolerate a much further increase of his local burdens), or, alternatively, as part of the Socialistic propaganda for ousting private enterprise in general, and obtaining public control over every trade or undertaking that deals with the supply of public requirements. Indications have not been wanting that the combined influence of these two parties—acting though they are from diametrically opposed motives—may result at some not far distant date in an attempt to bring



the Gothenburg System, or a modification thereof, within the range of practical politics in the United Kingdom ; and it is, therefore, a matter of much importance that the position should be well understood by that great body of British public opinion — represented, on the one hand, by moderate drinkers, and, on the other, by people who are not Municipal-Socialists—by which the deciding vote on the questions at issue will have to be given.

So much was written concerning the Gothenburg System some ten or fifteen years ago that it might seem almost necessary to apologize for offering still another book on the subject. But, apart from the considerations just presented, and apart from the fact that various new developments have been brought about, I may say that, although I had prepared for a tour of inquiry in Scandinavia by a diligent study of Gothenburg System literature, this previous reading in no way prepared me for what I found, on making my own inquiries, to be the real facts of the case. It is only natural that those who are officially concerned in the system in the countries where it has been adopted should seek to present matters in the most favourable light ; but there has been too much tendency on the part of inquirers from England or America—and especially on the part of compilers of books on the subject who have



not visited Scandinavia at all—to accept blindly the official statistics, to draw absolutely erroneous conclusions therefrom, and to make little or no attempt to get to the ‘bed-rock’ of actual facts. One authority in Gothenburg informed me that out of fifty visitors from England—writers, politicians, and others—who had called upon him to make inquiries into the system, many had spent only a few hours in the city, and others had stopped a full day, or even two, while the fact that one ‘investigator’ had remained a week constituted a record. That record, I may say, I took the liberty of breaking, in regard alike to Gothenburg and Christiania. In the latter city I not only obtained all the official information I could, but I visited the artisan and slum districts, under the escort of a capable and trustworthy interpreter, well acquainted therewith, and ascertained for myself what effect the restrictions enforced are actually having upon the people.

On completing my inquiries in Norway and Sweden, I went on to Denmark, and I would call the special attention of my readers to the account I give of the conditions in that country, and, more particularly, to the remarkable work which is being carried on by the Danish temperance societies on the basis of allowing their members to regard beer of low alcoholic strength as a temperance beverage. With the policy thus



adopted I have complete sympathy, because, although, individually, I am entitled to rank as a lifelong abstainer, I hold that the cause of sobriety—that is to say, of ‘temperance’ in the truest sense of the word—is greater far than the cause of extreme teetotalism, and may well be advanced, on practical common-sense lines, and to the distinct benefit of the nation, without that interference with individual freedom, that shelving of personal responsibility, and that injustice to particular classes of traders, which so much of the coercive legislation now being advocated in various quarters would assuredly involve.

EDWIN A. PRATT.

FARNBOROUGH, KENT,  
*November, 1906.*



# LICENSING AND TEMPERANCE

## CHAPTER I

### THE GOTHENBURG SYSTEM : EARLY DAYS

MANY different accounts of the Gothenburg system have been published from time to time, but, in my humble opinion, they have at least one fault in common—they do not begin at the beginning. They tell of the deplorable results that followed the brandy epidemic in Sweden—results quite as grave as those of the corresponding ‘gin epidemic’ in England in the early part of the eighteenth century—but extremely few writers trouble to inquire as to the circumstances that really led up to the conditions which, in due course, gave the *raison d’être* for the system in question. An initial investigation into these particular circumstances has impressed me all the more because of the further analogy I find in the two epidemics ; for, just as the gin epidemic in England was largely due to ill-advised legislation, so was the brandy epidemic in Sweden primarily due to the misguided action of one of Sweden’s rulers, and to the laws that followed thereon. Not only is the story important and of special significance from this point of view, but



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the reader will find, I think, that it is also interesting in itself, and deserving of some degree of attention.

At the outset of their history the Swedes were beer-drinkers, like their forefathers, and, though they drank freely, there is no evidence that the beer they consumed did them any great harm as a people. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries the drinking of *bränvin* (a spirit distilled from corn or potatoes, and containing from 40 to 50 per cent. of alcohol) came into vogue, and grew to such an extent that Gustavus Adolphus (King of Sweden from 1611 to 1632) and Charles XII. (who reigned 1697 to 1718, and was himself a water-drinker) both issued orders for the suppression of distilleries. But any good they did by orders in this direction was completely nullified by the policy of Gustavus III., who became King in 1771, and from whose reign the brandy epidemic in Sweden really dates.

A man of high aspirations and many good qualities, Gustavus III. came to the throne at a time when Sweden was practically ruled by an oligarchy of nobles, and the first task that lay before him was to break down their power and get the control of national affairs into his own hands. This accomplished, he found himself free to develop various ideas he had for the advancement of the country by (among other things) encouraging agriculture, improving the conditions of the peasantry, fostering commerce and mining, digging canals, and establishing hospitals, orphanages, workhouses, and other institutions. He



also, less happily, had the idea of making the Court of Sweden a rival of the Court of Versailles in splendour and magnificence; but the heavy expenditure into which he was led by this aspiration, following, as it did, the generous outlay on his various beneficent schemes, seriously affected the national finances, and the Swedish Parliament of those days thereupon declined to vote him the increased supplies of which he was in need. He thus had to consider how best he could raise funds in other directions.

In his dilemma he turned for an object-lesson to Russia.

Down to the sixteenth century the principal drinks of the Russian people were fermented beverages, such as mead, pivo, braga, and quass; but distilled liquors were introduced about that time by the Genoese (then in possession of the Crimea), and they were eagerly welcomed by a populace naturally disposed by temperament, climate, and other conditions to the use of the strongest drinks they could obtain. Vodka (corn brandy) seemed to satisfy this craving for stimulants more completely than the aforesaid fermented beverages, and before long it was recognised as the national drink, Russia thus becoming known as 'the land of vodka.'

To successive Russian rulers the opportunity thus afforded them of making money out of the vices of their people was too good to be lost, and they proceeded to exploit the new passion for vodka for all they could get out of it in the interests of their treasury. There was absolutely no pretence in Russia, in those days, of regulating



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the traffic with a view to checking insobriety. All that was aimed at was to make the manufacture and sale of spirits 'as prolific a source of revenue as the unlimited autocratic power of a ruler could possibly make it'; while coupled with the greed and power of the ruler were the greed and power both of a swarm of officials (from vice-governors of provinces downwards), who all wanted a few pickings for themselves out of the money raised before it reached the Imperial treasury, and also, later on, of numerous contractors, who farmed out the traffic from the fiscal authorities, and made huge profits from the business to as late a period as 1862, when the farming system was abolished, Government monopoly following in 1895.

How greatly the interests of the Russian peasantry suffered under a system which thus deliberately sought to stimulate and encourage their drinking propensity, and what a curse excessive vodka-drinking has become in Russia, under direct Government patronage, are matters I need not stay to discuss. The point I am here concerned in is that when Gustavus III. of Sweden looked round to see by what means he could best supplement his own inadequate revenue, he was struck by the great fiscal success of the Russian system, and resolved that he would himself see what he could do to raise money by means of distilled beverages.

If he had any qualms of conscience as to the prudence of this step, they must have been soothed by the then popular idea that, in encouraging the distillation of spirits from native-



grown produce, substantial advantages would be conferred on agriculture. In any case, the fact remains that he started business as a distiller by setting up Crown distilleries in 1774, and seeking to establish the production of spirits in Sweden as a Crown monopoly. So bent was he on achieving this aspiration that he turned into a distillery the venerable block of buildings constituting the Castle of Kalmar. Constructed originally in 1200, the castle had been rebuilt, enlarged, or restored at various periods, finally taking the form of a quadrangular edifice, with towers, ramparts, and moats; it had withstood eleven sieges, it had been the frequent residence of Kings and Princes, and it was now doomed to be converted into—a distillery! A windmill was even erected upon the highest tower, and, later on, the largest room in the castle, known as the ‘Unions-Sal,’ became the granary, the throne which had hitherto stood there being cleared out (so as to increase the space available for the grain), and sold for what it would fetch. In the further interests of the Crown monopoly, the Swedish pastors (most of whom were already their own distillers, and from whom many of the peasantry had learned the art) were called together, and told they must not only instruct the people that henceforth they were to get all their spirits from the Crown, but they were also to impress upon them that, as a national duty, they were to drink as much of such spirits as they could!

The action thus taken by the King led to widespread discontent. Popular uprisings occurred;



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there was a tacit revolt against the idea of a Crown monopoly, and illicit distilling and smuggling spread throughout the land. The opposition became so vigorous that the Crown monopoly had to be abandoned thirteen years after it had been set up, and the Government sought to appease popular clamour—and, at the same time, to further still more ‘the interests of agriculture’—by giving to every farmer the right to distil from his own produce for home consumption, while tavern-keepers in the country, and brewers and all freeholders in the towns, were empowered to distil for the market.

From this time the drinking of spirits in a most potent form became more than ever a national habit in Sweden, permeating all classes of society, but having consequences especially marked and especially deplorable for the peasantry in the country and the labouring people in the towns. The right of practically every man to do his own distilling became a fixed article in the national faith. At the beginning of the nineteenth century all persons possessed of cultivated land could distil; from them the same privilege was extended to tenants, provided the owner of the land gave them leave, the right to sell (in quantities of not less than 2 pints) going with the right to distil; while in the towns not only every householder, but even the householder’s lodgers (if he gave them permission), could distil on payment of a trifling tax to the State.

The result of this condition of things was that in the rural districts every peasant’s cottage



became, not only a distillery, but a place for the sale and consumption of home-made spirits of the worst possible type. A royal ordinance enacting stringent regulations against drunkenness was issued in 1813, but the evil was likely to remain as pronounced as ever so long as domestic stills were regarded as the natural right of every householder.

Some attempt at interference with them was made in 1824, but with so little success that five years later the number of stills on which license fees were paid (in a country then having a population of only 2,850,000) was no fewer than 173,124. At that time the annual consumption per head of the population of spirits containing close on 50 per cent. of alcohol was about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  gallons. The farm hands were not infrequently paid their wages in liquor, and drinking bouts were regarded in the light of patriotic gatherings, where every man present thought it his duty to drink as much spirits as he could in the special interests of agriculturists who otherwise would find it difficult to use up surplus produce for which there was no market. 'The whole country,' in the words of a traveller in Sweden at this period, 'was deluged in spirits.'

The consequences were indeed deplorable, and symptoms of rapid physical, moral, and mental decadence spread with steadily increasing gravity on every hand. But these results were essentially due, not to the action of a recognised 'trade' under effective magisterial and police control, but to the existence of national habits directly traceable to a baneful practice of



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household distilling originally established with the sanction and encouragement of the Legislature itself.

An active campaign carried on by the Swedish Temperance Society, which came into existence in 1837, had considerable influence in arousing public opinion; though it should be mentioned that the members of this society pledged themselves in regard only to 'spirituous liquors,' in which they included neither wine nor beer. In 1852 and 1853 over 800 petitions were presented to the King praying for an alteration in the licensing laws. These had already undergone some important changes in 1835, when land under a certain value was deprived of the right of distilling, which, also, was to be carried on for only six months in the year, while various other modifications were made; but the general conditions still remained such that in 1854 a Special Committee of the Diet reported:

'The comfort of the Swedish people, even their existence as an enlightened, industrious, loyal people, is at stake, unless means can be found to check the evil. Seldom, if ever, has a conviction so generally, so unequivocally, been pronounced with regard to the necessity of vigorous measures against the physical, economical, and moral ruin with which the immoderate use of spirits threatens the nation. A cry has burst forth from the hearts of the people appealing to all who have influence—a prayer for deliverance from *a scourge which previous legislation has planted and nourished.*'

These concluding words I have put in italics because they confirm so absolutely the argument I have ventured to advance.



Following on the report of the Special Committee in 1854 came the new Liquor Law of 1855, which, among other things, greatly curtailed the right of domestic distilling (though this was not finally suppressed until 1860), fixed the *minimum* quantity to be sold at such an amount as to abolish the smaller stills, further limited the time in which distilling could be done, gave country districts the power of curtailing the number of licenses, and, in the towns, made the granting of licenses the prerogative of the municipal authorities, who were to dispose of them by auction, and were further empowered to confer the whole of the licenses for retail and public-house traffic on a single company, under certain specified conditions, if they should regard such a course as desirable.

This idea of a 'company' had already been carried out at Falun in 1850 and Jönköping in 1852, but it was to remain unknown to the world at large until its adoption, in October, 1865, by the seaport and manufacturing town of Gothenburg, with whose name it has since been directly identified. In effect the fundamental principle of the system is that the licenses for the bar and retail sale of spirits in a particular town or district should be transferred by the local authorities to a company formed of various philanthropic persons, who will be content with a return of 5 per cent. on their share capital, will see that the traffic is effectively controlled, especially from the standpoint of eliminating private interest in the sales, and will pay over the net profits for use for various public purposes.



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From the story here told of the early days in Sweden I would turn to narrate briefly the events that preceded the introduction of the Gothenburg system into Norway.

Prior to her union with Sweden in 1814, Norway was under the dominion of Denmark, and the Danish Government prohibited her from having any distilleries of her own (though a few did actually exist in Norway), and further sought to prevent her from importing any spirituous liquors at all otherwise than from Denmark. These conditions were regarded as a great injustice by the Norwegian people, who resented such curtailment of their own liberties as one enforced in the interests of distilleries in Denmark and Holstein; and when Norway ceased to represent a part of the Dano-Norwegian absolute monarchy, and became an independent kingdom, with a free constitution (though united with Sweden as regards her royal house and foreign policy), it was a source of especial satisfaction to the Norwegians to know that they would now be able to follow the example of the Swedes in adopting the system of domestic distilleries. Such power was given them under the law of 1816 (which professed to have in view mainly the interests of agriculture), every owner or occupier of land being authorized to distil *brændevin* (the Norwegian name for the Swedish *bränvin*) from his own agricultural produce; while in towns any citizen might distil in stills containing at least 43 gallons, on payment of a very modest contribution to the State treasury.

‘Everyone in those days,’ as a Norwegian



writer says, 'considered that brandy was a delicious gift from God, the best medicine in all illnesses, and indispensable for workers; while the expectations of the advantages to be derived from the new political freedom were such that the idea of not conceding to every peasant and every citizen the right of distilling his own liquor was not to be entertained.' The drinking of spirits also entered more and more into the social life of the people, so that when the old restrictions on distilling were abolished, and an era of practically free trade in spirituous liquors was established, manufacture and consumption underwent rapid expansion. Seventeen years after the passing of the law in question the number of stills for which payment was made to the State was 9,727—namely, 9,576 in the country districts and 151 in the towns; while the consumption of spirits per annum had risen from  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon per head of the population to 4 gallons per head. The total amount manufactured in Norway at this time was 4,486,000 gallons a year; but there was no sale for the liquor either abroad (owing to the enforcement of non-importation laws by other countries) or at home (because of the poor, if not almost poisonous, quality of the home-made stuff), and the brændevin was generally consumed in the houses where it was distilled. When one peasant had a supply of liquor, he would summon his friends and neighbours to a drinking bout, and each of those friends and neighbours would do the same in succession. They indulged in the beverage on grounds that were alike personal and patriotic. They regarded



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brandy as an excellent tonic and a promoter of warmth in a cold country, and they thought also that the more they drank the greater would be the quantity of grain and potatoes used, and the more prosperous would agriculture become.

Nor were these ideas limited to the peasantry and the labourers. They were shared by people of all classes in Norway, and spirits came into universal use—alike at meals, social gatherings, friendly meetings, and on all other possible occasions. By 1836 the total consumption had doubled, and the results that followed therefrom were regarded in the light of a national disaster. In this same year an 'Association against Brandy-drinking' was founded at Stavanger by a theological student and temperance pioneer named Andresen, who became so active a propagandist that he broke down under his strenuous labours, and died at the early age of forty-three. Certain limitations on free distillery had been imposed between 1820 and 1840; but the vigour of the campaign against brandy-drinking was such that in 1842 the Storting passed a resolution declaring that at the end of ten years no further distilling at all should be tolerated in Norway. This proposal, however, was vetoed by the King, and the Storting afterwards fully recognised the impracticability of the idea. In 1845 and 1848 came laws which virtually abolished rural home-distilling, reduced the number of small distilleries in the towns, regulated both the wholesale and the retail trade in spirits, and imposed a steadily increasing manufacturers' tax on distilled liquors.



The effect of the various influences thus brought into operation was that the number of distilleries in Norway, which (as mentioned above) stood at 9,727 in 1833, fell to 1,387 in 1840, and to 712 in 1848, further steady reductions following, until eventually the total number was only about two dozen; though these are mostly important establishments, doing an amount of business which in former days would have been distributed over a large number of the smaller or domestic distilleries.

With the law of May 3, 1871, came the introduction of the Gothenburg System into Norway.\* Of the further developments in this connection I shall speak later on; but what I have already said on the subject of these early days will show, I think, that those undeniably great evils from excessive indulgence in ardent spirits which the Gothenburg system was designed to check were 'national' evils owing their origin, not to any highly organized 'trade,' actuated by a desire to enrich itself at the cost of the people (as the teetotal party generally would represent), but to the desire, on the one hand, of

\* Owing to various modifications, especially in regard to the allocation of profits, the system as carried out in Norway is in some quarters called the 'Norwegian,' as distinct from the 'Gothenburg' System; but the one has really been a modification of the other, just as the 'disinterested management scheme,' proposed to be set up in England, is only a still further adaptation of the same fundamental principle of 'control by philanthropic companies,' on the lines, however, of paying over all the surplus profits to the National Exchequer in the first instance.



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representatives of the State to secure increased revenue, and to the unwisdom, on the other hand, of so much of the past legislation. These considerations are all the more deserving of being borne in mind, inasmuch as the tendency on the part of advocates of the Gothenburg or of the 'disinterested management' system to-day is to rail against private trade in liquor, and to argue that all will be well if only the said trade is left in the hands of those rulers of the State in whose wisdom and absolute disinterestedness, they maintain, confidence can alone be placed.



## CHAPTER II

### GOTHENBURG CITY : BARS, BOTTLES, AND DRUNKENNESS

It is naturally to the city of Gothenburg itself that one looks for the most characteristic example of what is now known throughout the world as the Gothenburg System; but the visitor there who takes the trouble to ascertain the actual facts speedily learns how complete is the popular delusion that the 'liquor traffic' of Gothenburg is under the control of a company or 'Bolag,' such control being exercised merely by reason of the said company having in its hands the bar trade of Gothenburg. In point of fact, the Gothenburg company certainly does not 'control' the liquor traffic of the city, though, on the other hand, it is responsible for a good deal more than bar sales alone.

The immediate purpose for which the Gothenburg company was called into being was to control, not the entire trade in alcoholic beverages, but only the trade in spirits, and especially the native spirit known as 'bränvin.' To this end it holds from the municipal authorities all local licenses for the sale of spirits, formerly put up to auction by the municipality for disposal to the



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highest bidder. Of licenses for the sale of spirits on the premises it has sixty-one, and of these it uses forty-four, the remaining seventeen being not used. Of the forty-four licenses, thirteen are used for spirit bars which are directly managed by the company itself; four are used in connection with eating-houses set up by the company, where liquor can be obtained with meals only; and the remaining seventeen are granted to the keepers of better-class restaurants, boarding-houses, etc., who, however, are obliged to buy their spirits (though not their wine or beer) from the company. Of licenses for the sale of spirits for consumption 'off' the premises the company have thirty-three, and of these they use seven for retail shops of their own; they grant twenty-three to wine and spirit merchants in return for the payment of about £250 a year each, and three are not used.

The wine and spirit merchants here referred to are prohibited, under the conditions of their permits, from selling the native brandy (*bränvin*), for which the Bolag desires to have a monopoly; but there is no doubt whatever that they do an enormous retail business in the better class of spirits, and also in wines, over which business the Bolag has no control, provided that they do not sell in quantities of less than a full bottle, and that their prices do not compete with the price of *bränvin*. What the real extent of this trade may be is more than any outsider can say. One leading citizen in Gothenburg whom I consulted as a possible authority on the subject could only tell me that it must be (as he put it) 'very



enormous.' This I could well believe when I found that some of the merchants had large shops in leading thoroughfares of Gothenburg, at a rental of anything up to £400 or £500 a year; when I saw from official statistics that the importations of spirits (cognac, whisky, rum, liqueurs, etc.) into Gothenburg, mainly for distribution by such merchants, amounted (in round figures) to 142,000 gallons in 1900, 164,000 gallons in 1901, 144,000 gallons in 1902, 165,000 gallons in 1903, 110,000 gallons in 1904, and 108,000 gallons in 1905; and when, also, I was told (though here I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the statement) that one Gothenburg wine and spirit merchant alone has paid as much as £12,000 a year for bränvin he has bought from the distillers for conversion into what is known as 'Swedish cognac,' one of the superior spirits which these merchants may sell. But the trade done by the merchants is, naturally, not confined to Gothenburg. They have the advantages of a large local consumption for the beverages in which they deal; but by means of agents they spread the business throughout the greater part of Sweden as well. Although, therefore, the spirits here referred to may be purchased only by the 'better classes,' they nevertheless form a most important part of the liquor trade as a whole.

Then there were in Gothenburg, in 1905, between 800 and 900 persons who sold beer either 'on' or 'off' the premises. In that year each holder of the 'trader's license' which every shopkeeper in Sweden must take out was authorized, by virtue thereof, to sell beer for



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consumption 'off' the premises, no matter what his own particular business might be. How many of such traders actually took advantage of this position is not known, but the number was given to me by the chief of police as from 600 to 700. Of 'on' beer licenses there are 167 in Gothenburg; but in the discussions that arose on the subject it was the question of the 'off' sale that was considered of the greater importance. Under the existing regulations the police were consulted in regard to the 'on' licenses, but had no voice in respect to the 'off' licenses. This was altered at the beginning of 1906, when it was stipulated that all persons wanting to sell beer for consumption off the premises must make special application for a permit, in the concession of which the opinion of the police as to character of house, occupier, and neighbourhood was to be taken. In this way the number of places in Gothenburg selling beer for 'off' consumption has now been reduced from a vague 600 or 700 to an actual 440. The number of 'on' licenses remains about the same, so that there are in Gothenburg to-day still 600 places where beer is sold quite independently of the Bolag.

Nor has the monopoly of the Bolag in the matter even of bränvin been an absolute one, for there are in Sweden about seventy-five holders of privileged licenses (five in towns and seventy in country districts) who have not only been able to deal in bränvin, but have controlled about 40 per cent. of the spirit trade in Sweden. Their powers in regard to the 'off' trade will, however, be greatly reduced (at the instigation of the



Bolags) under a new Act coming into force in October, 1907.

It must be evident to the reader, from the facts given above, that the control exercised by the Gothenburg Bolag applies to a part only of the 'liquor trade.' It nevertheless represents, as already indicated, much more than the sale of bränvin at the thirteen drinking-bars. While the attention of writers on the subject of the Gothenburg System, as adopted in that city, has been concentrated almost without exception on the drinking-bars and their limitations and restrictions, practically nothing has been said by them concerning the retail shops also conducted by the Bolag. Yet the annual report of the company shows that, while their bar sales of spirits amounted to 648,766 litres in 1905, their retail sales were 1,198,697 litres, or 549,930 litres more.

In visiting Gothenburg, I went to some of the retail shops established by the Bolag, and I must confess that what I there found threw a new light on the subject, and one for which I had been in no way prepared. I found that, while a very effective control was certainly being exercised over the bar sale of bränvin in one set of shops, there was a much larger sale of bränvin in bottles proceeding in another set of shops, under conditions which left everyone free to buy as much as he pleased, provided he could raise 1 kr. 35 öre (equal to about 1s. 6d.) for each litre ( $1\frac{3}{4}$  pints), this being the minimum quantity sold. The business done, too, in these retail shops is almost incredible. In one that I went



into with the British Consul at Gothenburg, Mr. John Duff, I learned that the sales represented a turnover of no less than 360,000 kr. (£20,000) a year, and this, too, although the rental of the shop would probably not exceed £100 a year. The sales on a quiet day were about 300 litres. On Wednesdays they rose to about 600 litres; but on Saturdays they would run up to no less than 4,000 litres—roughly, 880 gallons. This would be a higher figure than the average for the whole of the shops (at another of which I learned that the annual turnover was £11,000); but, assuming such average to be 3,000 litres, we get the fact that from these seven retail shops belonging to the Gothenburg Bolag there are sent out every Saturday no fewer than 21,000 litres (say 4,620 gallons) of native brandy for consumption in the homes of the people either in Gothenburg or in the country round about; and those who know the weaknesses of the Swedish populace assured me that the greater part of the quantity would certainly be consumed before Saturday night closed.

I question very much if the well-meaning Bishops, politicians, and others in England who applaud 'disinterested management,' and would fain see it established in this country, have yet realized the particular phase of the business here indicated. If, instead of merely reading books on the subject, or of visiting the Bolag drinking-bars in Gothenburg in the quiet hours of the day, and becoming enamoured with the restrictions there, they would visit the Bolag retail shops on a Saturday afternoon, their ideas of the



Gothenburg System would probably undergo considerable modification. They would, at least, see the art of distributing large bottles of raw spirit among the working-class community reduced to a degree of real smartness and business-like expedition which could not well be surpassed. I am quite sure that the most energetic of store-keepers even in the United States would hardly fill 4,000 bottles, brought in by perhaps 3,500 customers, in a small shop between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. with greater despatch. At the back of the shop stand five large casks of bränvin. These communicate with a series of taps along the counter, each surmounted by a glass decanter-like measure, holding exactly 1 litre of spirit. One twist of the handle, and the decanter fills up with bränvin ready for the customer. Another twist, and in just about fifteen or sixteen seconds the spirit flows out of the decanter into the customer's bottle. In a few more seconds the attendant has driven a cork into the bottle (a basket of corks and a mallet standing by each tap), and the one customer will have paid and made room for the next, the whole transaction having lasted just about half a minute, though there is, of course, some waiting when the shop is crowded. So it goes on throughout the day, and on Saturdays almost without intermission, until the arrival of closing-time at six.

I was interested in watching the customers; but as significant an incident as any of those I saw was when a man from the country—evidently a carpenter—came in with a small



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cask and some bottles, in which he took away 5 litres of bränvin. He was, apparently, buying not only for himself, but also for some neighbours who had commissioned him to make their purchases for them. It is in this way that a large amount of bränvin gets distributed throughout the rural districts where the local sources of supply may be either very limited or non-existent, but where the local consumption may nevertheless be considerable.

Reverting to the liquor bars, I can willingly join in the chorus of praise in which all writers on the subject have indulged in regard to the excellence of their design and general arrangements. They are spoken of as a very great improvement indeed on the public-houses in vogue before the company system was adopted ; yet I doubt if that improvement is really any greater, in degree, than that which has been brought about in hundreds of instances in England where brewery firms who have acquired old and dilapidated public-house property have rebuilt, and provided in its place larger, more commodious, and better furnished houses, quite equal in appearance and comfort to anything that is to be seen in the Bolag shops in Gothenburg. One must remember, too, that in England the owners of public-house property are not allowed to make structural alterations without the consent of the licensing magistrates, and such consent is often hard to get in London, and in some other places is practically unobtainable ; whereas the director of the Gothenburg Bolag seems to have a perfectly free hand in regard to structural and other



arrangements. With any approach to the same degree of liberty, English brewers and publicans generally would, I feel assured, produce even better results than those seen at Gothenburg, even if, in many instances, they are not doing so already.

Much, again, has been said of the provision made for the supply of food, as well as spirits, by the Bolag ; and this has gone so far that between 12 noon and 2 p.m. liquor is served with food only—a regulation, however, which does not prevent a man from ordering two drinks and a sandwich (provided he pays 20 öre for the latter), swallowing the drinks, and leaving the sandwich.

But the arrangements in respect to food or meals are in no way superior, as a whole, to those made in many of the ‘managed’ houses in, say, the Tyne district, which I took the opportunity of seeing on my return from Sweden. Whereas, too, the managers of the Bolag houses get no percentage on the food consumed, and no longer have for themselves the profits on the beer and temperance drinks sold, I found that the landlady of many a modest public-house in the Tyne district, owned by brewers, was getting a fair return for herself from supplying food to customers when the business was not sufficiently large for such supply to be undertaken by the brewery company, although the latter not only encouraged her in so doing, but even guaranteed her against loss. I say, therefore, without hesitation, that anything done by the Gothenburg Bolag in the way of supplying food to either working-class or better-class customers could be



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more than matched by what I have seen under ordinary public-house management in England.

Then, no writer in praise of the Bolag system fails to lay much emphasis on the fact that the company do not use all the licenses originally conceded to them; that the houses are in no instances in back streets, and that they are essentially unpretending in appearance. All this is certainly true; but it is equally true that there are bars enough for the business done, and that they are located in exactly those spots (in the immediate neighbourhood of markets and docks) where they can be most readily entered, and where, in fact, they would get the most trade. As for the modest nature of the signboard over the door, that is a matter of no importance whatever, since every inhabitant of Gothenburg who wants a drink of bränvin knows exactly where it can be obtained. In some instances two Bolag shops are within a stone's-throw of each other. In one the shop has entrances from two different streets, with a bar at each end, so that there are really two public-houses in one. In fact, had the company been deliberately inspired by a desire to do the maximum of possible business, while getting the credit for 'reducing the number of licenses,' it could not have placed its bars in better positions for the attainment of that end. A Gothenburg resident once said to a Bolag official, 'Why don't you put your houses on the top of the hills?' meaning the hills which overlook the city. 'If we did that,' was the reply, 'we should get no customers.' 'But is not that what you want?' The Bolag official did not say.



The attention of the visitor is also called to the reading-rooms and the waiting-rooms for the unemployed which have been provided out of the Bolag profits. These serve a useful purpose, no doubt, but they are not to be compared with the excellent public institutions which certain firms of brewers in England have given to towns in whose welfare they are interested. There is, however, one respect in which Gothenburg conditions are unique: in the same building there will be one set of rooms for the working classes, and another for their social superiors; but the former rooms are closed two hours earlier than the latter. One can imagine what would happen in an English public-house if any attempt were made to introduce class distinctions such as these—the patrons of the bar being turned out of the house two hours before the favoured ones in the ‘parlour.’

Elaborate tables have been published from time to time with a view to showing that there has been a decreased consumption of spirits in Gothenburg under the Bolag system; but these tables have referred only to the sales effected by the Bolag itself, and have not included the very considerable sales of the private wine and spirit merchants, those of Scotch whisky, for example, being spoken of as ‘enormous.’ Without the figures which these merchants alone could supply, it is useless to attempt to give any figures as to the ‘total’ consumption of spirits in Gothenburg. The Bolag certainly claims a decrease in its own sales (though not at all a remarkable decrease in the last fifteen years), but the consumption even



of Bolag liquors per head of the population is substantially higher in Gothenburg than the total per head for the whole of Sweden. It is also uncertain whether or not such decrease as the Bolag figures show may not be accounted for by the transfer of a certain proportion of the Bolag trade—following on the restrictions enforced—to the beershops or beer-dealers, or to the spirit merchants ; but in any case the Bolag figures by themselves are absolutely worthless as evidence whether the consumption of spirits of all kinds (irrespective of beer) is increasing or decreasing in the city of Gothenburg.

Subject to the observations just made, I reproduce from the annual report of the Gothenburg Bolag the table on p. 27, which shows the bar and the retail sales of spirits by that company since 1875.

The figures given in the last three columns of this table are regarded in some quarters as satisfactory evidence of a decline in consumption in Gothenburg during the period in question ; but, as already explained, they suggest no more than a decline in the patronage of the Bolag shops ; and, taking into account the other sources of supply to which I have referred, and the increased patronage thereof, I fail to find any evidence of a real decline in the consumption of alcoholic beverages in Gothenburg at all. To my own mind, the special significance of the table lies in the very substantial increase shown in the retail trade of the Bolag as compared with the bar trade. The greater the difficulties put in the way of getting drams at the bar, the greater is



# THE QUESTION OF CONSUMPTION 27

## SALES OF SPIRITS BY BOLAG.

| Year. | Popula-<br>tion. | Spirits Sold (Litres). |                  |             | Number of Litres<br>per Person. |                  |        |
|-------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|------------------|--------|
|       |                  | Bar<br>Trade.          | Retail<br>Trade. | Total.      | Bar<br>Trade.                   | Retail<br>Trade. | Total. |
| 1875  | 59,986           | 779,371.0              | 867,369.7        | 1,646,740.7 | 12.99                           | 14.46            | 27.45  |
| 1876  | 61,505           | 811,225.0              | 935,530.0        | 1,746,755.0 | 13.18                           | 15.21            | 28.39  |
| 1877  | 63,391           | 891,515.1              | 812,901.2        | 1,704,416.3 | 14.06                           | 12.82            | 26.88  |
| 1878  | 65,697           | 894,349.8              | 735,091.5        | 1,629,441.3 | 13.61                           | 11.19            | 24.80  |
| 1879  | 66,844           | 840,957.3              | 623,337.0        | 1,464,254.3 | 12.58                           | 9.32             | 21.90  |
| 1880  | 68,477           | 760,676.0              | 622,774.5        | 1,383,450.5 | 11.11                           | 9.09             | 20.20  |
| 1881  | 71,533           | 724,801.1              | 645,434.3        | 1,370,235.4 | 10.13                           | 9.02             | 19.15  |
| 1882  | 72,555           | 661,889.3              | 623,332.9        | 1,285,222.2 | 9.12                            | 8.59             | 17.71  |
| 1883  | 77,653           | 667,899.6              | 736,592.0        | 1,404,491.6 | 8.60                            | 9.48             | 18.08  |
| 1884  | 80,811           | 691,236.5              | 778,681.7        | 1,469,918.2 | 8.55                            | 9.63             | 18.18  |
| 1885  | 84,450           | 712,974.5              | 812,449.3        | 1,525,423.8 | 8.44                            | 9.62             | 18.06  |
| 1886  | 88,230           | 726,650.0              | 840,021.8        | 1,566,671.8 | 8.12                            | 9.53             | 17.75  |
| 1887  | 91,396           | 699,384.2              | 845,989.9        | 1,545,384.1 | 7.65                            | 9.25             | 16.90  |
| 1888  | 94,370           | 703,678.6              | 877,247.7        | 1,580,926.3 | 7.46                            | 9.29             | 16.75  |
| 1889  | 97,677           | 634,782.3              | 933,373.5        | 1,568,155.8 | 6.50                            | 9.56             | 16.06  |
| 1890  | 101,502          | 652,461.9              | 970,171.4        | 1,622,663.3 | 6.43                            | 9.56             | 15.99  |
| 1891  | 104,215          | 697,151.9              | 848,876.4        | 1,546,028.3 | 6.69                            | 8.14             | 14.83  |
| 1892  | 106,356          | 628,229.9              | 813,287.3        | 1,441,517.2 | 5.90                            | 7.65             | 13.55  |
| 1893  | 106,959          | 563,684.3              | 848,302.4        | 1,411,986.7 | 5.27                            | 7.93             | 13.20  |
| 1894  | 108,528          | 532,732.4              | 881,490.2        | 1,414,222.6 | 4.91                            | 8.12             | 13.03  |
| 1895  | 112,670          | 560,945.9              | 916,559.7        | 1,477,505.6 | 4.98                            | 8.13             | 13.11  |
| 1896  | 115,521          | 570,750.0              | 960,749.4        | 1,531,499.4 | 4.94                            | 8.31             | 13.25  |
| 1897  | 117,534          | 603,578.7              | 1,006,265.0      | 1,609,843.7 | 5.12                            | 8.56             | 13.68  |
| 1898  | 120,151          | 655,016.6              | 1,098,468.7      | 1,753,485.3 | 5.45                            | 9.14             | 14.59  |
| 1899  | 122,370          | 728,354.6              | 1,229,843.6      | 1,958,198.2 | 5.95                            | 10.05            | 16.00  |
| 1900  | 125,825          | 715,733.6              | 1,317,361.5      | 2,033,095.1 | 5.69                            | 10.47            | 16.16  |
| 1901  | 128,977          | 706,380.8              | 1,364,533.4      | 2,070,914.2 | 5.48                            | 10.57            | 16.05  |
| 1902  | 130,702          | 753,693.2              | 1,158,291.1      | 1,911,984.3 | 5.76                            | 8.86             | 14.62  |
| 1903  | 132,015          | 724,997.7              | 1,090,114.2      | 1,815,111.9 | 5.49                            | 8.26             | 13.75  |
| 1904  | 134,289          | 767,804.6              | 1,145,391.6      | 1,913,196.2 | 5.72                            | 8.53             | 14.25  |
| 1905  | 136,884          | 813,978.8              | 1,198,697.9      | 2,012,676.7 | 5.95                            | 8.75             | 14.70  |

the temptation offered to men to procure a bottleful, and do their drinking at home. Whether or not this procedure is in accord with



the best interests of the working classes, I leave the reader to say for himself; but the point I must urge with all possible emphasis on all who would judge the matter aright is that conclusions based on the character and extent of the Gothenburg bar trade, without taking fully into account this still larger retail trade, must necessarily convey an entirely wrong impression.

Whatever uncertainty there may be in the figures respecting consumption, there is no room for doubt that there has been of late a substantial increase in the amount of drunkenness in Gothenburg. The convictions for drunkenness per head of the population since 1865, when the Bolag was formed, are given on p. 29.

It is certain that some of the fluctuations noticeable in this table have been due to economic causes, and especially to changes in trade, wages, and character of population. There is, also, no doubt that some of them are to be attributed, in the case of Gothenburg as in that of other Scandinavian cities where the Gothenburg System has been adopted, to divergencies in the policy adopted from time to time by the police in regard to drunkenness. It should be remembered that, wherever the Gothenburg System is put in force, the local municipality and the liquor company at once become partners in the enterprise, for the credit of which the local authorities will desire that as lenient an eye as possible may be cast upon drunkards, so that the statistics of drunkenness may be kept down. This has undoubtedly been the case at certain periods in the history of Gothenburg, though



# THE QUESTION OF DRUNKENNESS 29

## GROWTH OF DRUNKENNESS IN GOTHENBURG.

| Year. | Convictions<br>per 1,000<br>of Population. | Year. | Convictions<br>per 1,000<br>of Population. |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1865  | 45                                         | 1886  | 31                                         |
| 1866  | 30                                         | 1887  | 32                                         |
| 1867  | 29                                         | 1888  | 31                                         |
| 1868  | 26                                         | 1889  | 34                                         |
| 1869  | 28                                         | 1890  | 40                                         |
| 1870  | 26                                         | 1891  | 44                                         |
| 1871  | 28                                         | 1892  | 42                                         |
| 1872  | 28                                         | 1893  | 38                                         |
| 1873  | 32                                         | 1894  | 34                                         |
| 1874  | 38                                         | 1895  | 31                                         |
| 1875  | 42                                         | 1896  | 35                                         |
| 1876  | 39                                         | 1897  | 44                                         |
| 1877  | 40                                         | 1898  | 54                                         |
| 1878  | 32                                         | 1899  | 54                                         |
| 1879  | 31                                         | 1900  | 51                                         |
| 1880  | 31                                         | 1901  | 42                                         |
| 1881  | 32                                         | 1902  | 45                                         |
| 1882  | 29                                         | 1903  | 47                                         |
| 1883  | 30                                         | 1904  | 45                                         |
| 1884  | 29                                         | 1905  | 52                                         |
| 1885  | 29                                         |       |                                            |

the present chief constable of the city has the reputation of being an extremely capable officer, who would not be likely to tolerate any weakness or neglect of duty on the part of his men. It may even be that the recent increase is due in part to this greater efficiency rather than to any actual increase in street drunkenness, the figures now only reaching a point at which they should have stood before.



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On the other hand, there is reason to fear that a considerable amount of unrecorded drunkenness goes on in the houses of the working-class community, owing to the large quantities of bränvin sold at the retail shops of the Bolag for home consumption, the victims sleeping off the effects, and thus not coming under the notice of the police unless actual disorder arises. In these circumstances the real condition of the city is, possibly, even worse than the figures suggest.

The question as to the extent to which the increased drunkenness in Gothenburg may or may not be due to the increased consumption of beer is one I propose to consider in a later chapter; but before leaving the general subject there are two other tables which I think might usefully be reproduced.

The following shows the days of the week on which the arrests for drunkenness in Gothenburg took place in the years stated:

DRUNKENNESS IN GOTHENBURG: DAYS OF THE WEEK ON WHICH ARRESTS WERE MADE.

| Year.    | Sun. | Mon.  | Tues. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri.  | Sat.  | Total. |
|----------|------|-------|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1899 ... | 616  | 1,007 | 788   | 826  | 724    | 964   | 2,123 | 7,048  |
| 1900 ... | 500  | 935   | 852   | 839  | 668    | 861   | 2,077 | 6,732  |
| 1901 ... | 413  | 791   | 753   | 703  | 560    | 738   | 1,695 | 5,653  |
| 1902 ... | 410  | 837   | 732   | 834  | 659    | 845   | 1,882 | 6,199  |
| 1903 ... | 387  | 865   | 797   | 784  | 686    | 872   | 2,043 | 6,434  |
| 1904 ... | 364  | 903   | 738   | 782  | 717    | 814   | 2,015 | 6,333  |
| 1905 ... | 458  | 1,023 | 972   | 928  | 747    | 1,086 | 2,492 | 7,706  |

My next table gives a return as to statements by persons arrested for drunkenness in Gothen-



burg concerning the places where they got their last drink. The table is an old one, but I found there was none other available, for a series of years, and this will serve my immediate purpose :

DRUNKENNESS IN GOTHENBURG : HOW THE  
ARRESTED GOT THEIR LAST DRINK.

| Year. | Bolag<br>Bars. | Bottles<br>bought at<br>Retail<br>Shops. | Beer-<br>houses. | Could not<br>tell. | Total. |
|-------|----------------|------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------|
| 1895  | 606            | 725                                      | 995              | 1,352              | 3,678  |
| 1896  | 611            | 866                                      | 1,270            | 1,483              | 4,230  |
| 1897  | 730            | 1,029                                    | 1,647            | 2,138              | 5,544  |
| 1898  | 1,456          | 1,828                                    | 1,938            | 1,661              | 6,883  |
| 1899  | 1,461          | 2,123                                    | 1,932            | 1,532              | 7,048  |

I warn my readers against putting implicit faith in this second table. It is avowedly based on the statements of drunken men, and the Bolag officials especially doubt the accuracy of the column headed 'Bolag Bars,' alleging that, owing to their dislike of the restrictions imposed, Gothenburg drunkards are in the habit of saying 'Bolag' when asked concerning their last drink, so as to revenge themselves on the managers. It is also clear that, although the last drink may have been taken in a beerhouse, there is no evidence as to the number of drams of bränvin by which it was preceded. The most significant of the figures (apart from the steady advance in the total) are, to my mind, those in the third



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column, and these, probably, are fairly trustworthy. Looking both at these figures and at the previous table, I find ample evidence to support the view (1) that the chief drunkenness in Gothenburg occurs on the Saturday; and (2) that it results in an ever-increasing degree from the fact that men purchase litre bottles of spirits on the Saturday at the retail shops, as provision for the Sunday, but are unable to resist the temptation of emptying them the same night.



## CHAPTER III

### PRIVATE PROFITS AND PUBLIC GAIN

CRITICISM of the Gothenburg System as a whole must necessarily be based on (1) principles and (2) actual results, and prominently among the former one must place the assumed elimination of all motives of private interest. Here the first question to be asked is, Has such elimination really taken place?

If those who financed the companies did so without expecting any return whatever on their money, and gave us reason for assuming that they were actuated by philanthropy pure and simple, one could more readily accept the theory of an entire absence of private interest. But the 5 per cent. which is assured to them before any question arises with respect to actual profits is by no means a bad return from a financial point of view, especially as no real risk is run. It is conceivable that a very large number of persons with money to invest would be only too glad to have the opportunity of a 'good thing' such as this without making any pretence that they were merely seeking to promote the welfare of their fellow-men. Such a position becomes still more tenable when one thinks of the enormous sums of money invested in commercial undertakings



which do not yield anything like 5 per cent. Taking the case of ordinary stock in the railways of the United Kingdom, I find that in 1905 no less than £56,691,000 received no interest or dividend at all; on £16,969,000 the amount of dividend paid did not exceed 1 per cent.; on £42,821,000 it was between 1 and 2 per cent.; on £126,692,000 it was between 2 and 3 per cent.; and on £78,934,000 it was between 3 and 4 per cent. To talk, especially, to the holders of the £56,000,000 ordinary railway stock yielding no return whatever about the beneficence of the shareholders in the Gothenburg System companies who are 'content' with 5 per cent. preference dividends would be something like a mockery. Even in the case of the highest yielding companies in the United Kingdom stock can hardly be bought now to yield 5 per cent., and this notwithstanding the recent heavy decline in prices.

Certain it is, also, that such a return on capital compares favourably with that which is obtained from investments in other companies in Norway, at least. Writing on this subject in 1893, Mr. Michell, then Consul-General at Christiania, said :

' A preferential payment of 5 per cent. on the shares of the association is an exceedingly strong inducement for promoting the prosperity and extension of the associations. Their 400-kronor (about £22) shares have never fallen below par, and when money is cheap they fetch as much as 430 kronor in the financial market.

' The right of the municipalities to buy up at par, within a certain number of years, all the shares of an association



alone prevents the shares from being constantly at a premium.

‘The best Government securities (loans) and the bonds of the Land Mortgage Bank of Norway do not yield a higher rate of interest than 3 to 4 per cent. Their value is at the same time liable to be swayed by a variety of circumstances. The financial credit of Governments, as well as that of land mortgage banks, comes and goes, but as drink is likely to go on for ever to an extent, at least, that cannot fail to give its vendors a benefit of 5 per cent. on invested capital, it is not surprising to find that all towns in Norway have been eager, if only from that point of view, to avail themselves of the advantages offered by the Gothenburg System.’

The idea, therefore, of shareholders having no private interest in the liquor business merely because they are willing to accept ‘only’ 5 per cent. is really absurd. One must remember, again, that the Gothenburg System companies have played an important local rôle as distributors of the profits for public purposes, securing in this way a position of influence in the community that might almost be regarded as equivalent to a substantial bonus. For a man wanting to secure a certain position in a small community (in addition to 5 per cent. for himself), nothing could suit his purpose better than to become a leading member of a licensing company.

Then it is assumed that if the licensing business is only left in the hands of Governments or municipalities there will be a complete disappearance of any desire for financial gain, and that the good of the community will be the sole aim kept in view. Such an assumption is wholly inconsistent alike with past history and present



experience. The fact is, rather, that Governments in all lands have generally been as keen to raise revenue out of the liquor trade as any private individual could be to secure profits for his own pocket, and this tendency on the part of Governments has been reproduced more or less under the various modifications of municipal control of licenses.

Mr. Michell said on this point in regard to conditions in Norway :

‘The municipalities themselves are strongly interested, not only in the establishment of associations for the sale of spirits, but also in their prosperity.

‘The larger the surplus at the disposal of an association, the greater are the benefits which the town expects to reap. Roads, parks, waterworks, railways, schools, museums, etc., are priceless benefits in a country relatively so poor, and in which taxation, local or central (already very high in towns), cannot always be resorted to for the attainment of such objects.

‘The favour with which the municipalities and the Government itself regard the associations in question facilitates the establishment of their dealings on a basis satisfactory to all parties concerned—namely, the shareholders, the municipalities, and the central Government.’

He gave one or two illustrations of how the liquor business was, at that time, really being promoted, in spite of statements to the contrary, and went on :

‘On all the above grounds it may boldly be asserted that the original, purely philanthropic, object of the associations (considered collectively) has been gradually departed from, and that the old licensed victualler, often under circumstances of great hardship, has been replaced throughout the great part of the country by hundreds of



holders of 5 per cent. shares, by administrators practically and otherwise interested in the distribution of larger and larger surpluses from the sale of spirits, and by municipalities well content to improve and embellish their towns without recourse to direct communal taxation for those purposes.'

The Rev. Joseph M'Leod, a member of the Canadian Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic in Canada, wrote of the system in his minority report :

'However unselfish the original intentions of the Gothenburg System, there is much reason to believe that, as at present managed, it is simply a profitable monopoly of the liquor traffic, in which the shareholders in the companies, the municipalities, and the central Government participate';

while in his 'Conclusions,' set forth in this report, he said on the same subject :

'The original purpose of the system has largely been lost sight of. Intended to save the liquor traffic from the dangerous features supposed to arise out of the greed of individual licenses, it has degenerated into a system to encourage and satisfy the greed of shareholders scattered all over the country. It also appeals to the cupidity of municipal authorities and to that large class, found in every community, who think they see in the revenues derived from the traffic a relief from taxation.'

Then the House of Lords Committee on Licensing said of the Gothenburg System :

'It cannot be denied that the almost universal adoption of this system was not due simply to the desire of promoting temperance, but also, and perhaps mainly, to the hope of applying the large profits derived from the sale of liquors to the reduction of local taxation.'



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Other authorities have been no less condemnatory, and I am bound to say, as the result of my own investigations, that the whole system certainly does lend itself to a good deal of criticism from the financial standpoint. Whatever view may be taken as to the 'elimination' of direct 'private profit,' it must be admitted that there has been substituted for it (assuming such elimination to have taken place) a public gain which is really only private advantage in another form, and is, in effect, proving an even stronger incentive for the conduct of the business on strictly business lines. Instead of private individuals, whole communities are now interested in the profits, to which they look as a means either of keeping down the demands made upon them by the rate-collector, or of securing a host of public improvements or 'charities' which they would otherwise have to pay for or support out of their own pockets, if they wished to have them at all. Assuming that the communities do not really want to 'press' the sales, there are local expressions of regret if those sales go down and the available profits decrease. The 'brandy money' has become, in fact, a most important element in municipal finance, and, although the salaried officers of the Bolag may proclaim absolute indifference whether the profits are £5,000 or £10,000 more or less in a year, I doubt if a local municipality regards the matter from quite so independent a standpoint. The whole idea of 'disinterested management' has proved to be only a delusion and a snare.

A significant story as to the way in which



matters have been worked is told by Dr. Gould in respect to an incident that once occurred at Sogne Fjord, Norway. A physician asked the local company for a contribution towards a certain hospital in which he was interested, but the company pleaded lack of funds. At that time it was usual to close the spirit bars and retail liquor shops in Sogne Fjord whenever the fishermen returned home with successful catches, so that they should not spend their money in drink. Acting on a suggestion made by the physician, the company withdrew this regulation, kept the places open on the said occasions, and increased their business to such an extent that in due course they were able to let the doctor have the desired subscription.

Some years ago the prohibitionist party in Norway, as the result of persistent agitation, secured a vote of no-license in several of the smaller towns, and the ‘Samlags’ were consequently closed. Much ill-feeling was caused thereby, but the main grievance advanced by the press was that the communities had lost large sources of income, and must either do without advantages previously enjoyed, or pay for them out of their own pocket.

The number of towns in Sweden where the Gothenburg System is now in operation is 101. In fact, there are only seven towns in Sweden with a population of less than 1,000 each where it has not been put in force. One is asked to assume that these 101 towns have all been inspired by purely philanthropic motives in what they have done. But, when one looks at matter-



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of-fact details, one finds that the net profits on such philanthropy amounted, in 1905, to 11,338,860 kronor (£629,936). This was in addition to 440,237 kronor (£24,458) which the Bolags had already paid on liquor duties, so that the gain to the communities represented a total of 11,779, 097 kronor (£654,394).

It would be really childish to expect one to believe that these very substantial pickings have not influenced the local communities in any way. I asked a leading citizen in Gothenburg what would be thought of the position if the temperance societies in Sweden were suddenly to convert all the working classes to total abstinence from brandy-drinking. A look akin to consternation came over his face as he replied: 'I do not know what we should do without the brandy money. We depend on it for so many things.' While, however, there has been every inducement hitherto for the towns to work the trade on business lines (philanthropy notwithstanding), there has for some years past been great dissatisfaction on the part of the country districts because they have not participated to a larger extent in the financial benefits. Farmers and farm labourers, they say, go to the towns for their bränvin, and not only do they take their money out of the district, but the municipalities gain the advantage. There is also a party which holds that the State acted unwisely at the outset in allowing the local authorities to have the handling of so much money. The profits should, they argue, be used to a much greater extent for national, in preference to local, purposes. This argument would



probably have prevailed years ago but for the influence of the municipalities.

The somewhat undignified quarrel that has taken place over the profits of a business which Swedish 'philanthropy' would have us regard as pernicious has been one of the reasons for the passing of a new Liquor Act, to come into force, in towns, on October 1, 1907, and, in the country, on November 1, 1907. Without going into somewhat complicated details, it may be said that under this new law the towns will be able to keep only a substantially smaller proportion of the Bolag profits for purely local purposes, and will be required to send much more to Stockholm than they do at present for distribution among the rural districts. Thus the latter will gain at the expense of the former, though the effect will be (as even one of the most earnest supporters of the Bolag system admitted to me) that 'the towns will have less inducement to try to make money out of the traffic.'

Under existing conditions, the Bolag at Gothenburg gives seven-tenths of its profits to the town authorities, one-tenth to the county agricultural society, and sends the remaining two-tenths to Stockholm for division among the country parishes. It is estimated that for 1906 the seven-tenths thus to be paid into the town treasury will be £46,666, of which £20,291 will be used for the ordinary purposes of local government, thus presumably keeping down the demands on the rate-payers, and £26,375 will go to local 'philanthropic' purposes, included in this definition being schools (one of which gets £6,000), institutes for



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working men, domestic economy classes for workmen's children, meals for poor children, Bolag reading-rooms and waiting-rooms, concerts for working people, parks, a home for consumptives, a labour bureau, museums, libraries, subsidies to lawyers who give gratuitous advice to poor people, a committee for the encouragement of sports, and so on.

But for the existence of the Bolag system, various of these objects would, as in England, have to be met either directly out of the rates or out of the purses of the charitable. The individual members of the community, therefore, have a direct pecuniary interest in regard alike to the £20,291 added to the municipal revenue and to the £26,375 devoted to local 'philanthropic' purposes. Whether they want to 'press' the bränvin traffic or not, the fact remains that the greater the profits the more they will collectively and individually benefit. I fail to see, therefore, how it can really be said that the Gothenburg System 'eliminates' the element of 'private gain.' There is 'private gain' to every person in the local community upon whose purse fewer demands are made because of the bränvin money being available, and the talk about 'restrictions' on the traffic must be considerably discounted by the fact that any sudden cessation of the profits would be regarded by the general body of ratepayers and citizens in the light almost of a financial disaster.

One resident in Gothenburg, who had watched the system for many years, said to me, when I asked for his candid opinion :



‘Taking the movement as a whole, there is too great a leaning towards profits. To-day there is very little philanthropy in the affair. If they would only give up the idea of making money out of the business, they could do a great deal more to promote the sobriety of the people.’

A similar view seemed to be taken by a Salvation Army officer, who, in answer to my question as to whether or not he thought the system was doing good, replied :

‘I do not think the Bolag is making much for temperance. In one respect it places more difficulties in the way. When the trade was in the hands of private individuals we could go to them whenever we saw anything wrong, and make a personal appeal to have the matter remedied. But the Bolag is a different matter. The leading people in the place are connected with it, and they will tell you how much good the brandy-money is doing in the way of public improvements or in maintaining charities. As to raising the prices of the spirits sold, I do not think any real good is done by that. When the men want drink they will get it, whatever the price. If the time should come when they really cannot afford to buy bränvin, they will have methylated spirits instead, and that is much worse for them. If, again, you keep them from the bars, it means they will take more spirits into their own homes; and, though this may reduce the risk of bad companionship, it will have a bad effect on the children. Much more useful, in my opinion, is the reduction in the alcoholic strength of the bränvin,\* but no really lasting reform will be brought about until you get down to the hearts of the people.’

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\* The alcoholic strength of the bränvin sold by the Gothenburg Bolag stood at 47 per cent. from 1866 to 1883. Since then reductions have been made as follows: 1884, 46½ per cent.; 1888, 45 per cent.; 1899, 44 per cent.; 1902, 43 per cent.; 1904, 42 per cent.; 1905, 41 per cent.; 1906, 40·2 per cent.



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For still another view on the general subject I take the following from an address delivered by the Rev. Elis Heuman, Court Chaplain, at a temperance meeting held in Stockholm in April, 1905 :

‘Who is it that causes the public-houses to be embellished so as to become elegant and inviting in order to allure men and women away from their less decorated and more humble home? Who is it that distributes public-houses all around the church, and gives the traffic the misleading name of the “Gothenburg System”? Is it not Society yearning after vile profit? And if anyone desires to substitute a dram-shop by a temperance eating-house, Society does not permit this to be done. Every proposal in any such direction is made in vain. It would diminish Society’s profits on the traffic in intoxicants.’

The extreme keenness of local authorities to get these profits into their own hands is well shown by an incident for the truth of which I can vouch absolutely. An Englishman settled in Sweden had the disposal (as trustee) of some hotel property in a town of 3,000 inhabitants, and he put it up to auction. The sale was attended by a leading member of the local municipal body, who tried so successfully to depreciate the value of the property that he was the only bidder, though the bid he made was so absurdly small that it was refused. Steps were then taken to effect a sale by private treaty, and a widow lady agreed to purchase, if she could make sure of a license. On the strength of a letter written by a member of the municipal council, stating that the license would certainly be granted, she bought the property; but there-



upon the council repudiated the letter of the member in question, and definitely refused the license. In the end the lady was obliged to let the municipality take over the place on their own terms.

This may or may not be an isolated case ; but it illustrates the risks that are run where a local authority has a powerful financial incentive to get control of the trade, or even a portion of the trade, in alcoholic drinks. Nor can the fact be denied that abuses of other kinds have been introduced into the application of the system in Sweden, especially in the case of small towns, where the rents of Bolag premises have been manipulated to the advantage either of the municipality or of private persons ; where the 'companies' have consisted of two or three individuals ; where the representatives of particular distilleries have joined in the movement with the idea of getting contracts ; or where profits have been distributed among charities started in the interests less of the poor than of the salaried officers. While it is admitted that such practices did, unhappily, prevail at one time,\* it is said they do not now occur ; yet, when I mentioned the subject to one gentleman at Gothenburg, he at once pointed to a paragraph in a local newspaper of the previous day, stating that the accounts of two Swedish Bolags (the names of which were given) had just been condemned by the auditing authority, and the matter had been referred to the King. It is not a little significant, also, that, at the end of forty years' operations, the necessity

\* See Appendix.



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should have arisen practically to reconstruct the system in one of its most essential features, the distribution of the profits, so as to check the rapacity of the towns, and satisfy the rival claims of the State and of the country districts.

How the profits have worked out in the case of the Gothenburg Bolag is shown by the following table, which I take from the official report for 1905 :

GOTHENBURG BOLAG PROFITS AND PRICES.

| Year. | Net Profits. | Proportion of Profits per Litre of Spirits Sold. |               | Sale Price of Bränvin. |                           |
|-------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
|       |              | Bar Trade.                                       | Retail Trade. | Bar Trade (per Glass). | Retail Trade (per Litre). |
|       | Kronor.      | Öre.                                             | Öre.          | Ore.                   | Kronor.                   |
| 1866  | 50,782.67    | 16.7                                             | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1867  | 93,791.38    | 21.2                                             | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1868  | 104,088.70   | 21.                                              | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1869  | 168,239.73   | 27.                                              | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1870  | 196,483.58   | 24.3                                             | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1871  | 191,759.93   | 22.7                                             | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1872  | 206,188.67   | 27.1                                             | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1873  | 257,546.72   | 29.4                                             | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1874  | 254,393.39   | 26.7                                             | —             | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1875  | 665,512.00   | 43.6                                             | 30.8          | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1876  | 721,862.04   | 43.                                              | 32.3          | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1877  | 697,565.43   | 43.2                                             | 32.           | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1878  | 594,092.56   | 36.6                                             | 27.6          | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1879  | 607,601.14   | 40.6                                             | 33.3          | 6                      | 0.95                      |
| 1880  | 489,433.18   | 38.2                                             | 24.8          | 7                      | 0.95                      |
| 1881  | 593,348.88   | 48.3                                             | 30.6          | 7                      | 0.95                      |
| 1882  | 538,344.31   | 47.                                              | 28.7          | 7                      | 0.95                      |
| 1883  | 517,399.65   | 42.9                                             | 24.2          | 7                      | 0.95                      |



## GOTHENBURG BOLAG PROFITS AND PRICES.—*continued.*

| Year. | Net Profits. | Proportion of Profits per Litre of Spirits Sold. |               | Sale Price of Bränvin. |                           |
|-------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
|       |              | Bar Trade.                                       | Retail Trade. | Bar Trade (per Glass). | Retail Trade (per Litre). |
|       |              | Öre.                                             | Öre.          | Ore.                   | Kronor.                   |
| 1884  | 562,999.86   | 45.1                                             | 25.1          | 7                      | 0.95                      |
| 1885  | 616,031.94   | 47.8                                             | 27.           | 7                      | 0.95                      |
| 1886  | 663,133.07   | 49.4                                             | 30.           | 7                      | 0.95                      |
| 1887  | 715,597.81   | 54.4                                             | 31.9          | 7                      | 0.95                      |
| 1888  | 728,557.70   | 55.                                              | 31.3          | 8                      | 1.00                      |
| 1889  | 682,231.32   | 55.4                                             | 28.6          | 8                      | 1.04                      |
| 1890  | 794,270.60   | 62.4                                             | 33.           | 8                      | 1.04                      |
| 1891  | 699,812.93   | 57.2                                             | 27.8          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1892  | 699,634.27   | 57.5                                             | 33.5          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1893  | 702,407.55   | 57.                                              | 37.3          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1894  | 725,823.55   | 57.8                                             | 39.7          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1895  | 728,653.91   | 57.                                              | 37.1          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1896  | 817,394.41   | 61.3                                             | 41.3          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1897  | 831,348.56   | 61.2                                             | 38.8          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1898  | 889,304.33   | 59.9                                             | 37.4          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1899  | 967,757.13   | 59.2                                             | 35.           | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1900  | 1,018,859.01 | 54.2                                             | 39.1          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1901  | 921,576.41   | 48.8                                             | 33.9          | 8                      | 1.10                      |
| 1902  | 932,757.45   | 45.9                                             | 40.7          | 8                      | 1.20                      |
| 1903  | 958,671.48   | 45.4                                             | 46.4          | 9                      | 1.35                      |
| 1904  | 1,144,469.37 | 53.3                                             | 52.2          | 9                      | 1.35                      |
| 1905  | 1,318,497.41 | 61.9                                             | 55.1          | 9                      | 1.35                      |

It will be seen from this table that the net profits of the company, given in pounds sterling, increased from £2,821 in 1866 to £73,249 in 1905.

The reader will further observe that since 1866



the company have made substantial advances in the prices charged for their bränvin, whether sold at the bar or in the bottle. The reason given for these advances in price is that the company have been inspired by a philanthropic wish to check the consumption; and this, they say, they have done. But it will be seen that this policy has in no way checked the profits, which have swollen substantially with each such advance, whether regarded from the point of view of sum total or per litre sold. Possibly the company would have us believe that this very substantial increase in net profits is one of the inconveniences to which philanthropy must be prepared to submit when it is working for the public good—on business lines. This at least is certain, that each increase in price throws a greater burden on the consumer, to the advantage of classes higher in the social scale.

Whatever the precise view taken of the steady advance in the price of bränvin from time to time, one undoubted effect thereof on habitual drinkers of the most hardened, as well as of the poorest, type has been to cause them to leave the more expensive bränvin for special domestic or other occasions, and take to the cheaper methylated spirits as a steady drink. The cost of a litre of methylated spirits in Sweden is from 35 to 40 öre the litre, as against 1 kr. 35 öre the litre for bränvin.\* The patron of the former in Sweden first of all obtains some bones, and burns them to powder, through which he filters the methylated spirits, thus depriving them of

\* 100 öre = 1 krone = 1s. 1½d.



part of their most noxious taste. Even then the effects (I was told) are 'horribly intoxicating.'

Not so many years ago there was a remarkable and, at first, unaccountable outbreak of drunkenness in the parish of Lindome, near to Gothenburg. It was known that no exceptional quantity of bränvin had been brought into the place, yet the amount of insobriety was far in excess of that in other parishes in the neighbourhood. Inquiries eventually showed that a large proportion of the local artisans, carpenters by trade, had given themselves up to the drinking of methylated spirits, their intoxication thus being accounted for.

Opinions differ as to the extent to which the consumption of methylated spirits has been carried in Sweden. In some quarters I was assured it was 'enormous.' On the other hand, the chief of police at Gothenburg told me that he had given instructions to his force to distinguish in their reports between drunkenness arising from methylated spirits and drunkenness due to other beverages (a difference easily noticeable on account of the odour of the methylated spirits), and he had found there were not very many cases of the former. I suspect the real truth lies between the two statements, and that, inasmuch as the methylated spirits would be consumed, not at public bars, but in private houses, much may be taken, and much drunkenness caused thereby, without the matter coming under the notice of the police in the streets. In any case the evil has gone so far that in the new Act which comes into force in October, 1907, the



statement is made: 'With regard to the conditions of selling so-called methylated spirits, H.M. the King has issued special regulations relating to this traffic.' There would surely have been no need for these special regulations unless the mischief had undergone serious development.

The resort to substitutes for bränvin has not been so great in Sweden as in Norway, the restrictions on the sale of native spirits being less severe in the former country than in the latter; but in considering the official figures as to consumption of bränvin the point here mentioned must certainly not be overlooked.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE POSITION IN NORWAY

THE first town in Norway to adopt the company system was Christiansand, where a Samlag was set up in 1871. Christiania followed this example in 1885, and to-day the system is in force in thirty-two towns in Norway; in two the sale of spirits independently of a Samlag is permitted; and twenty-nine towns have declared by popular vote, in which all men and women over twenty-five years of age may take part, in favour of prohibition, such vote remaining in force for a period of five years, when the community votes again, and, should it so please, may change its mind. To such an extent has the movement been carried that, out of 500 rural communes, with an average population of 3,000 each, spirit licenses exist in only thirteen, and in only about one-half of the communes can even beer or wine be bought, while in a large proportion of these the beer or wine can be obtained only by travellers. In such places the resident population must either go without alcoholic liquors, or else obtain them as best they can from towns where the sale is permitted. Even in Bergen, a town with a resident population of 80,000 people, no one of the hotels may supply spirits to any of the tourists



who flock there every year, nor may a 'merchant' cater for their possible wants in respect to spirits. If they desire a glass of brandy, they must go or send to one of the six liquor-shops kept by the local Samlag, and purchase either a small bottle or (the only alternative) a litre. This is done in the alleged interests of temperance; but the result is that the average tourist gets, and probably consumes, more than he wants, and he may, on his departure, leave the still partly-filled bottle behind in his room—in which case the hotel servants (to the risk of their own sobriety) help themselves to the remainder. Even on the walls of the room at the Grand Hotel, Christiania, where these lines are being written, I read the intimation, in four languages:

'Notice is directed to the law prohibiting the sale of spirits or liqueurs between 1 p.m. on Saturday and 8 a.m. on Monday. Visitors are requested to give their orders on Saturday before noon.'

If it be really the case, as Dr. Sigfrid Wieselgren, President of the Swedish Temperance Society, asserts in his pamphlet, 'More About the Gothenburg System,' that the system was organized 'to counteract the impoverishment of the working classes through drinking on credit in unhealthy, dark, and dirty hovels of public-houses,' then I can only say that in Norway this original purpose has been widely departed from. Londoners will better realize the conditions in Christiania if they imagine the possibility of the sale of spirits being stopped at the Carlton Hotel or the Hôtel Métropole, with the idea of main-



taining sobriety among the porters in Covent Garden Market, or the day-labourers resident in the East End !

On the other hand, all classes of the community are placed on the same footing in Norway, where the Swedish anomaly, under which there is an early hour of closing for the labourers, and a later hour of closing for their social superiors, is avoided. In this way, too, there is less idea of 'class legislation,' and tourists and well-to-do citizens are alike inconvenienced in the supposed interests of the working people.

The result of the conditions here indicated is that in the country districts of Norway the consumption of alcoholic beverages has declined very considerably, because of the difficulty in the way of obtaining them. Prohibition and restriction are more readily enforced in Norway than is the case in the United States or Canada, or than would be the case in Great Britain, because of the limited means of communication, and in the more out-of-the-way places especially, the only chance a peasant has to get a drink occurs either when he can go to a town, or when a neighbour going there will bring a bottle or a cask for him. The position was altogether different in those former days when every Norwegian peasant was allowed to be his own distiller. To-day the peasant is, generally speaking, an abstainer *malgré lui*, and to this extent the consumption of intoxicants has certainly fallen off in Norway.

But the position is very different when, from the rural or mountainous districts of Norway, more or less difficult of access, we turn to the



towns, and especially to the capital, Christiania, where a relatively large population is to be found.

In the first place, it is generally assumed by British supporters of the 'company' system that the liquor traffic at Christiania is controlled by a philanthropic company in the same way as they think is the case at Gothenburg; but the delusiveness of that idea is as complete in regard to the Christiania Samlag as I have already shown it to be in the case of the Gothenburg Bolag.

In actual fact, the Samlag at Christiania controls the fourteen existing spirit-bars where brændevin (the Norwegian equivalent of the Swedish brännvin) may be obtained in glasses. At nine of these fourteen dram-shops a retail trade is also done by the Samlag, but the bulk of the retail trade has been passed over to the wine and spirit merchants. In addition to the fourteen dram-shops, the Samlag controls the sale of spirits in each of the sixteen hotels to which permits have been granted; complete charge of this branch of the business in such hotels being taken by representatives of the Samlag, who receive all the money paid for spirits and pay it over to the company, a sum equal to about 15 per cent. of the takings being afterwards given to the hotel proprietor for rent or compensation.

But while the sales of spirits thus effected by the Christiania Samlag—that is to say, their bar, retail, and hotel sales collectively—are officially reported to amount to 413,000 litres the year,



the sales of spirits by the twenty-nine wine and spirit merchants are estimated by the Samlag officials at no less than 2,000,000 litres the year. These wine and spirit merchants hold licenses from the Samlag for the retail trade, and down to the end of 1904 they paid for such licenses a uniform fee of 10,000 kronor (£555). In return for this fee they were allowed to sell, not only 'superior' spirits, as dealt in by the wine and spirit merchants of Gothenburg, but also the so-called 'native brandy,' the retail sale of which is kept by the Gothenburg Bolag in their own hands. They are also allowed to sell in small bottles (about half a pint), whereas the minimum quantity that passes over a Bolag retail counter in Gothenburg is one litre.

Every fresh restriction imposed by the Christiania Samlag on the bar and the hotel sale of spirits has put fresh business into the hands of the local wine and spirit merchants, whose trade has further benefited by the restrictions imposed in other parts of Norway as well; Christiania thus becoming more than ever a distributing centre for the bottle business throughout the country. What the trade done by these merchants really represents, none but themselves could say. It must certainly have been advancing of late years on the 'leaps and bounds' principle, and the Samlag officials arrived at the conclusion that they were not getting a sufficiently large share of the profits. On the basis of their 2,000,000 litre per year estimate (declared by the merchants themselves to be altogether excessive), the Samlag is now charging for its retail licenses according



to the assumed sales by the merchants, so that the existing scale ranges from 10,000 kronor (£555) to 17,000 kronor (£940) each. Under these new conditions the total amount paid by the wine and spirit merchants for their licenses in 1905 was 348,500 kronor (£19,361), as against 317,000 kronor (£17,611) in 1904.

Now, it is obvious that only business of a really substantial character could stand a tax like this upon its takings, in addition to rent and other fixed charges; and, whether one accepts the 2,000,000 litre estimate or not, there is no possible room for doubt that the business done by the merchants in regard to spirits alone is far in excess of that done by the Samlag, which is so erroneously supposed to 'control' the traffic. Any conclusions, therefore, as to the decreased consumption of spirits, and the consequent increased sobriety of the people, based on figures which represent Samlag sales exclusively, will at once be seen to be hopelessly fallacious.

Still less does this alleged 'control of the liquor traffic' by the Samlag system become when we pass on to consider the sale of beer in Christiania. Apart from the bars and the retail shops where spirits, or spirits and wines, may be bought, there are in the capital 301 places which have licenses for the sale of beer on the premises, namely, 215 annual licenses; 75 which permit of beer being sold only to persons taking meals; 5 which apply to the sale of light beer only; and 6 licenses available during the life of the present holder. Then there are no fewer than 1,610 licenses held by grocers, dairymen, etc., for the sale of beer



for consumption off the premises. Of the holders of these 'off' licenses 647 can also sell wine. Other licenses, 40 in number, authorize the sale of wine only. Finally, all the local residents who possessed citizenship rights prior to 1882 may trade in wine, among other items of 'general merchandise'; but the number of these specially privileged ones is not known. Leaving them out of account, however, it will be seen from the figures given that there are in Christiania 2,000 places where alcoholic drinks of different kinds can be purchased, and that of these the Samlag operates only thirty. Nor do we reach the end of the chapter even here; for Christiania possesses eight breweries conducted on a sufficiently large scale to employ altogether 1,124 persons, and some at least of these breweries do a large trade direct with householders. Altogether, therefore, it is obviously a complete fallacy to say that the Samlag 'controls' the local liquor traffic. In point of fact, all it does is to control one particular section thereof.

Reverting to the conditions in Norway in general, it cannot be denied that any successes secured by the policy of restriction have only been won in the face of serious difficulties; that the fluctuations in sales and recorded drunkenness have often been due rather to economic and other causes than to the direct influence of the policy in question; and that in various ways the final result has been less to cure the failings, and transform the habits, of the people, than merely to substitute one set of shortcomings for another.

An early effect of the stern severity of the



Samlag liquor-shops in Norway was to cause people to look out for alternative means of supplying their wants. Nor can one be surprised at this when one hears of such restrictions as those imposed at Christiansand, where, some years ago, the directors not only cut down the size of the glasses, but ordered that no person should have more than one dram every three hours. Coupled with such severities as these, the advance in prices, so that brandy should be less easy of attainment, further led men to club together and buy the liquor at cheaper rates in casks, the contents of which were divided among the purchasers in either town or country.

Beer, again, began to show a tendency to take the place of spirits, and one would have thought that, if the Government had really desired to promote the sobriety of the people, they would have encouraged the substitution of a beverage with a low percentage of alcohol for one with a high percentage. But they could not resist the temptation of securing more money from beer for revenue purposes, and in 1894 they raised the duty on malt from 17·1 öre per kilogram (at which it had stood since 1879) to 21·1 öre, a further advance to no less than 37·1 öre per kilogram following in 1895. Not only was a check thus given to the consumption of beer, owing to the substantial increase in price that followed, but the coming in force, on January 1, 1896, of the further restrictions imposed under the Act of 1894, and also the fact that the Prohibitionist party voted down the Samlags in a number of places, establishing prohibition instead, led to



the adoption of less healthy substitutes for brændevin than the beer which should otherwise have taken its place.

It was under these circumstances that there spread rapidly in Norway the use of a particularly atrocious kind of cheap so-called 'wine,' known as 'laddevin,' and consisting, it is said, mainly of spirit which had been already made in Norway, exported to Hamburg, there sweetened, weakened, mixed with various compounds and chemicals—so that it eventually had about 20 per cent. of alcohol—and then sent back in the form of 'wine,' which could be sold at very low rates. Owing to the restrictions imposed by existing treaties, the Norwegian Government were unable, down to the year 1904, to put higher duties on imported wines, and the resort to laddevin, in place of the 'controlled' brændevin, was carried to such an extent that the consumption thereof per head of the population rose from an average of 0·88 litre per year in the period 1886-1890 to 2·49 litres in 1896-1900, attaining a maximum of 2·75 litres in 1898. More rigid police measures were then enforced, and the consumption per head fell to 2·24 litres in 1902 and 1·84 litres in 1903. A much more serious decline followed the imposition of heavy import duties in 1904, the consumption per head of the population in 1905 being only 0·85 litre.

Once more I would point out how misleading statistics of consumption in Norway, based on Samlag sales of brændevin, must inevitably be when there are left out of account the very considerable sales taking place in other directions.



In what way was sobriety promoted if, instead of getting a glass of brændevin at a Samlag bar, people bought a bottle of the much more seductive compound known as laddevin? And seductive that compound undoubtedly is. 'It goes, as one authority told me, 'to the feet rather than to the head. A person sits drinking laddevin at a table, and so long as he remains seated he scarcely feels any ill-effects, and appears to be quite rational. He therefore goes on drinking; but when at last he rises from his seat, he can no longer control his limbs, and he is then seen to be thoroughly intoxicated. Laddevin, again, is the favourite beverage of women drinkers in Norway, on account of its sweetness.

Another substitute resorted to by persons who could not afford to pay the increased prices for brandy was found in methylated spirits. These cost about the same as laddevin, namely, 50 or 60 öre the bottle, against 40 öre charged for 1 litre (equal to about a bottle and a third) of laddevin. But the methylated spirits go further than the laddevin, because of the addition to them of hot water and sugar for the production of a sort of grog.

The worst substitute of all, however, adopted by hardened drinkers in Norway, and representing the last stage in the career of the incorrigible toper, is 'Politur,' popularly known as 'Skaap.' In effect this is the compound used by French polishers in their work, salt being added to the bottle (which is then shaken up), so as to cause the shellac to sink to the bottom and there



solidify, the separated spirit on the top being drunk as a beverage. A viler drink, short of actual poison, could hardly be imagined. It produces speedy intoxication, and often delirium tremens in addition, while it also has a most pernicious effect on the system. But it has the advantage of being cheap, a beer-bottle full costing only about fourpence, and I was told of men in Norway who almost live upon it, and have attained to old age in spite of its noxious qualities.

Those, therefore, of the Norwegian people who will drink in spite of all difficulties placed in their path, and who cannot pay for, or have difficulty in getting, the 'controlled' brændevin, have found substitutes in much worse beverages, which have thus been brought into widespread use, brændevin being regarded among a large number of the poorer classes in Norway as a drink only to be indulged in on the occasion of some special domestic festival, such as a wedding or a christening. Obviously, however, it is quite a mistake to assume that fewer intoxicants are being taken in Norway merely because the official statistics in regard to sales of brændevin may show a falling off.

Nor are the aforesaid people who will drink, in spite of all impediments, seriously inconvenienced by the early closing of the bars on Saturday and the total closing on Sunday. Here there are two alternatives at least open to them to pursue.

In the first place, a group of men will assemble early on Saturday evening in the room of some



individual who lets them have the use of it for the occasion, and who either helps them to consume the liquor they bring with them in bottles, or will make a profit by supplying them with bottles, of which he has himself already laid in a stock. There is one particular district in Christiania where, as I found on visiting the 'slums,' from eight to ten people actually depend on such profits for a livelihood, while the number of places where parties of drinkers, bringing their own liquor, can be received as 'friends,' could hardly be estimated. In these rooms—whatever the precise conditions—the toppers sit and drink their laddevin, their methylated spirits, their politur, or, more rarely, their brændevin; they talk and they play cards; and when, finally, sleep or drunkenness overtakes them, they lie down indiscriminately on the floor, and there remain until Sunday morning, when, the supply of liquor being exhausted, they betake themselves to their homes. Women sometimes join in these proceedings, but, generally speaking, the men are by themselves. Attempts have been made by the authorities to check the practice, and local improvement schemes carried out in Christiania have been so planned as to involve the demolition of some of the worst of these 'sly-grog' establishments; but the people driven out of one place seem to experience no great difficulty in finding another.

The second expedient resorted to is an open-air one, and is in vogue from April or May to the early part of September, according to climatic conditions. Here the practice is for a party of,



say, six or seven to assemble on the Saturday afternoon, and go off to a wood three or four miles from the centre of the town, taking with them a blanket and a supply of laddevin (in covered milk-pails) equal to at least 1 litre per person. Arrived at their wood, they fix on a comfortable spot, attach their blanket to some trees, so that they will not be seen by any passers-by, and in this improvised tent, open at the top to the heavens, they proceed to consume their liquor. The orgie will, in any case, last the night through, and the men, sleeping on the ground, may, perhaps, be seen walking unsteadily home in groups the next morning; but it is a common occurrence for the camp not to be broken up until Sunday evening, while occasionally these ‘week-ends in the country’ will be prolonged until Monday morning.

These are examples of the sort of thing going on in Norway under the operation of the ‘company’ system, whose leading supporters appear to assume that, when both the Samlag establishments and the hotel bars for the sale of spirits have been closed at one o’clock on Saturday until Monday morning (to the inconvenience, in the latter instance, of many a British tourist), all is well with ‘the people.’

There is still another drawback to the system which should be mentioned. Under their local option rights the inhabitants of most of the country districts have voted against the opening of any drinking bars in their locality at all, so that when the peasants go into the town from time to time to do their business, a visit to a



Samlag establishment is a special source of attraction to them ; while, not being accustomed to drinking brændevin (except on these occasions), they readily become intoxicated. This tendency has been noted by the ne'er-do-wells in the towns, and a class of people, known by the name of ' Bondefangere ' ( ' peasant - catchers ' ), lay themselves out to prey upon the innocents from the country, by first making friends with them, then getting them to drink more than they should, and finally robbing them of the money which they will either have received in the town, or, alternatively, have brought with them to spend for agricultural or domestic necessities. These conditions should especially be borne in mind in connection with that decline of spirit-drinking in the rural districts themselves of which one hears so much.

Passing on to consider the statistics as to the possible effect which the Samlag system may have had on the consumption of spirits in Norway, I take the figures given on p. 65 (with the exception of the total per head for 1905, which I have added on the basis of official information) from the ' Statistisk Aarbog for Kongericht Norge ' for 1905, showing (*a*) total production and consumption of brændevin in Norway per head of the population, such total including imports actually consumed in the country ; and (*b*) the percentage thereof sold by the authorized companies.

It will be seen from this table that there was a considerable decline in consumption in the years 1896-97-98, and again in 1905. The



# CONSUMPTION OF SPIRITS 65

| Year. | Total<br>per Head. | Percentage<br>of Sales by<br>Companies. | Year. | Total<br>per Head. | Percentage<br>of Sales by<br>Companies. |
|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|       | Litres.            |                                         |       | Litres.            |                                         |
| 1885  | 3.5                | 32.1                                    | 1896  | 2.3                | 56.4                                    |
| 1886  | 3.0                | 41.4                                    | 1897  | 2.2                | 60.5                                    |
| 1887  | 2.8                | 43.2                                    | 1898  | 2.6                | 55.7                                    |
| 1888  | 3.1                | 40.1                                    | 1899  | 3.3                | 43.8                                    |
| 1889  | 3.2                | 41.8                                    | 1900  | 3.4                | 43.2                                    |
| 1890  | 3.1                | 49.1                                    | 1901  | 3.4                | 46.5                                    |
| 1891  | 3.7                | 42.9                                    | 1902  | 3.4                | 46.0                                    |
| 1892  | 3.2                | 51.3                                    | 1903  | 3.2                | 47.0                                    |
| 1893  | 3.5                | 45.6                                    | 1904  | 3.3                | 46.8                                    |
| 1894  | 3.8                | 39.7                                    | 1905  | 2.7                | ?                                       |
| 1895  | 3.5                | 41.2                                    |       |                    |                                         |

decrease in the first-mentioned period does not necessarily mean that the people were then drinking less. It really means that, following on the increased restrictions under the law of 1894, they took less brændevin, but much more of the cheap foreign laddevin, to the largely-increased importation of which at this period I have already referred. The falling off in 1905 is attributed by leading authorities in Christiania mainly to the political events of that year, which so fully engaged the attention of the people that they—temporarily, it is thought—paid less attention to the consumption of liquor. Leaving these two particular periods out of account, the figures in this official table hardly suggest that there has been any serious decline in the consumption of native brandy per head of the population in Norway as a whole as the result of the



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Samlag system. It will be further seen that since 1897 and 1898 there has been a substantial reduction in the percentage of the total sales falling to the share of the Samlags.

Taking next the question of drunkenness, the following table in regard to arrests for that offence alone, or for drunkenness in connection with other offences, in the city of Christiania for the period 1890-1905, is especially significant :

| Year.    | Population. | Arrests for Drunkenness, etc. |                          |
|----------|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
|          |             | Total.                        | Per 1,000 of Population. |
| 1890 ... | 145,000     | 10,096                        | 70                       |
| 1891 ... | 150,300     | 11,602                        | 77                       |
| 1892 ... | 155,500     | 11,496                        | 74                       |
| 1893 ... | 160,900     | 12,876                        | 80                       |
| 1894 ... | 167,500     | 12,611                        | 75                       |
| 1895 ... | 175,000     | 13,526                        | 77                       |
| 1896 ... | 183,600     | 19,249                        | 105                      |
| 1897 ... | 193,800     | 21,521                        | 111                      |
| 1898 ... | 208,400     | 19,583                        | 94                       |
| 1899 ... | 220,000     | 22,176                        | 101                      |
| 1900 ... | 225,900     | 20,381                        | 90                       |
| 1901 ... | 227,700     | 17,083                        | 75                       |
| 1902 ... | 226,700     | 13,474                        | 59                       |
| 1903 ... | 229,600     | 13,390                        | 58                       |
| 1904 ... | 226,100     | 11,705                        | 52                       |
| 1905 ... | 228,000     | 9,884                         | 43                       |

Here one notices the great increase in the number of arrests for drunkenness in 1896. The explanation of this is that 1895 marked the end of a period of economic depression in Norway,



and with the following year there succeeded an era of prosperity, which lasted until the summer of 1899. A great boom in the building trade in the capital was one of the main reasons for the substantial advance in the population returns, and not only had the men engaged in the building trades such exceptionally good wages that they were reputed to be able to indulge even in champagne, but many of them came from country districts where they had not been accustomed to strong drinks, and were thus easily intoxicated when they took to them.

But the real significance of the increased drunkenness shown by these official returns lies in the fact that such increase took place owing to economic causes over which the Samlag system, with all its restrictions, clearly had no real control. When times were prosperous the workers got drunk irrespective of the Samlag. When acute depression set in again they drank less, but that was more because of shortness of funds than because of Samlag influence. The decline shown in 1905 over 1904 naturally follows on the decreased consumption attributed to the exceptional causes to which I have already made reference.

Corresponding figures for Bergen work out as given in the table on p. 68.

Speaking generally, I must confess that I am not disposed to place too much faith on these and other statistics of drunkenness. They may vary according to the activity or the toleration of the police from time to time even in the same town; the police standard of drunkenness may



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| Year. | Population. | Arrests. |                          |
|-------|-------------|----------|--------------------------|
|       |             | Total.   | Per 1,000 of Population. |
| 1890  | 52,400      | 1,122    | 21                       |
| 1891  | 53,400      | 1,047    | 20                       |
| 1892  | 54,600      | 690      | 13                       |
| 1893  | 55,600      | 815      | 15                       |
| 1894  | 56,600      | 948      | 17                       |
| 1895  | 57,800      | 1,381    | 24                       |
| 1896  | 59,900      | 1,866    | 31                       |
| 1897  | 62,400      | 1,789    | 29                       |
| 1898  | 66,000      | 1,844    | 28                       |
| 1899  | 69,500      | 1,815    | 26                       |
| 1900  | 71,500      | 2,181    | 31                       |
| 1901  | 72,800      | 2,081    | 29                       |
| 1902  | 74,600      | 1,978    | 27                       |
| 1903  | 74,800      | 1,778    | 24                       |
| 1904  | 78,200      | 1,589    | 20                       |
| 1905  | 79,000      | 1,781    | 23                       |

differ in one town as compared with another; the returns from one source may include drunkenness accompanied by breaches of the peace or other offences, whereas in another set of returns these cases would be dealt with separately; while there is ground for suspicion that, in Norway at least, far more people get drunk than are included in the official statistics.

For example, in the return of drunkenness in Bergen it will be seen that there was a sudden decline in the figures for 1892 as compared with those for 1891. That was because the municipality, interested in the success of the Samlag system, got alarmed at the zeal of a new chief



of police—who had ordered his men to arrest everybody they saw drunk on the streets—and told him to keep down the returns by arresting only those drunkards who were troublesome. He followed instructions, and, according to the official returns, Bergen at once became more sober. Then the effect of discouraging men from patronizing the recognised drinking-bars (where excess would be at once noticed), and causing them to indulge rather in all-night orgies in woods or private rooms, where they can sleep off a drunken fit unobserved, and without having to come out into the streets until they are sober, must also affect the official returns, although the amount of actual drunkenness in and around a town may, in fact, be greater than ever.

The possibility of there being a good deal of drunkenness in Norway which does not get recorded in the official reports was further shown in 1899, on the occasion of the annual ski sports at Holmenkollen, a popular pleasure resort near to Christiania. With the help of a number of University students stationed at different points in the district, a census was taken of the number of persons who returned from the festival 'visibly' intoxicated. It was found that out of 16,000 visitors 'only' 340 were in the condition described, and the total was mentioned to me with a feeling of pride, as representing a creditably small percentage. I will not stop to discuss the figures from that point of view. My concern with them here consists in the fact that, although under the Norwegian law the entire 340 were liable to prosecution for being 'visibly'



intoxicated, I was informed that not one of them was proceeded against, because the drunkenness in question 'occurred in the country.'

Under these various conditions, I think I am warranted in not attaching too great an importance to official statistics of drunkenness in regard even to a particular country, and still less, I consider, can just comparisons be made in this respect between the statistics of one country and those of another. But of one thing I have no doubt—that, while the consumption of alcoholic beverages of all kinds may be decreasing in the country districts of Norway under a system of rigid prohibition, the working of the Samlag system in the towns operates quite as much in the direction of drunkenness as it does in the direction of sobriety; for while a good check may be put on the bar business, the man who buys a bottle or a half-bottle where he would otherwise be content with one or two glasses, or who lays in a supply on the Saturday for that and the next day, and finishes it off by Saturday night, assuredly drinks more than he would otherwise do, provided he could depend on getting, when he wanted it, the amount he required for immediate consumption. There is more recorded drunkenness in Norway on Saturday than on any other day in the week, and this fact is directly due to the habit of providing against the compulsory closing of the spirit-bars from 1 p.m. on Saturday until Monday morning. What the unrecorded drunkenness due to the same cause amounts to is more than anyone can say.



I come now to the question of the distribution of the profits realized under the Samlag system. Previously to 1894 these profits (after the payment of 5 per cent. interest to the shareholders) remained in the hands of the various companies, to be devoted by them to such philanthropic or public purposes as they might think deserving of support. The sums thus controlled were so substantial that direct encouragement was given to the starting of a considerable number of semi-philanthropic, if not of more or less bogus, institutions, which could not have existed but for the brandy traffic, but tending to transform the practice and direction of the so-called philanthropy into a remunerative profession. At the same time, the number of those disposed to depend on charity in one form or another steadily increased, while there was a diminution in the need for appeals on behalf of objects or institutions which might otherwise have had to be supported either out of the rates or by the public in general. In the end, a condition of things was brought about which led to the revolutionary law of 1894.

Under this law the State took 65 per cent. of the profits of the Samlags, to make them the basis of a national fund for sick-pay and old-age pensions; the local municipalities were to have 15 per cent., and the remaining 20 per cent. was alone to be distributed by the Samlags themselves for charitable or philanthropic purposes. This reconstruction considerably modified the municipal and the 'local gains' element in the Samlag business, and gave much point to the criticism to which the developments of local



control had led. But even these changes did not satisfy those of the critics who lived in the rural parishes. They pointed out—quite justly—that when the people living in the prohibition districts wanted to buy spirits, they made their purchases in the towns; so that a good deal of money was going from the country into the towns, and helping to swell the profits from which the towns derived so substantial a benefit. They therefore demanded that the rural districts should be allowed a fair share of the brandy money, and in 1904 another law was passed, which provided that the percentage allocated by the Samlags for distribution for philanthropic purposes should be gradually reduced, by the year 1908, to 10 per cent., the difference going to the prefectures of the eighteen rural districts ('amts') for the benefit of the communities there.

Thus, in Norway as in Sweden, one finds on the one hand a movement which aims at controlling and restricting the traffic in spirits with the declared object of safeguarding the general welfare; and, on the other, some approach to a 'scramble' for the profits the said controllers make out of a traffic they profess to denounce.



## CHAPTER V

### DRUNKENNESS AND BEER-DRINKING

ALIKE in Sweden, in Norway, and also in Great Britain, great efforts have been made for years past by active supporters of the Gothenburg System to prove that any increase in drunkenness in the countries where that system is in operation is due, not to the failure to control effectively the sale of spirits, on the lines laid down, but to the increasing consumption of beer; and on this ground persistent demands are made by the Bolag or Samlag parties that they should be granted a monopoly of the sale of beer akin to the control they now exercise over the sale of native spirits.

In support of these contentions and demands good use has been made of the following figures, showing the average annual consumption of beer in Sweden per head of the population for the periods stated: 1851-1860, 10·5 litres; 1861-1870, 11·0 litres; 1871-1880, 16·8 litres; 1881-1890, 21·8 litres; 1891-1895, 27·6 litres; 1896-1900, 33·4 litres. One certainly gets here evidence of a substantial increase in the consumption of beer, but it would be still more interesting if one knew to what extent that increase was directly due to the greater restrictions put on the sale of



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spirits. If the one be the effect of the other, and if the increased drunkenness be due to the increased consumption of beer, then the Gothenburg System has merely caused a diversion from one set of drinks to another, and its success as a temperance measure becomes still more doubtful than before. My own view of the matter, however, is that the talk about beer being a main cause of drunkenness in Sweden and in Norway is very much exaggerated, and is due mainly to an attempt on the part of supporters of the company system to evade responsibility for the weaknesses of their own particular scheme.

To begin with, while it is certainly true that the consumption of beer has increased in Sweden (with which country I will deal first), it has not attained to anything like abnormal proportions as compared with the consumption per head in other countries. This is shown by the following table, which I take from the 'International Statistics' of Mr. Gustav Sundbärg, an eminent Swedish authority :

ANNUAL CONSUMPTION OF BEER PER HEAD OF  
THE POPULATION FOR 1896-1900.

| Country.          | Litres. | Country.        | Litres. |
|-------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Sweden ... ..     | 33·4    | Germany ... ..  | 122·6   |
| Norway ... ..     | 20·3    | Austria-Hungary | 45·0    |
| Denmark ... ..    | 97·4    | Switzerland ... | 68·0    |
| Finland ... ..    | 10·6    | France ... ..   | 25·4    |
| Great Britain and |         | Italy ... ..    | 0·6     |
| Ireland ... ..    | 144·0   | Russia ... ..   | 5·1     |
| Belgium... ..     | 208·0   | Servia ... ..   | 2·4     |



I find, further, that the tendency of late years in Sweden has been distinctly in the direction of brewing lighter and still lighter beers. The Swedish Lager beer, which commands a large proportion of the total sale, contains only about 4 per cent. (weight) of alcohol; and Pilsener, which shares with it in popularity, ranges from 3·50 to 3·80 per cent. of alcohol. Modifications of the same beers, known as Lagerdricka and Pilsnerdricka, have, the former 3 to 3·4 per cent. of alcohol, and the latter about 2·7 or 2·8 per cent. Still another malt beverage in common use is known as Svagdricka, and this has only 1·80 per cent. of alcohol (weight). In Sweden no duty is paid on beers containing less than  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. volume, or 1·80 per cent. weight of alcohol, and not brewed with more than 6 per cent. of extract.\*

From the Swedish official statistics in respect to the production of different kinds of beers I get the following figures :

PRODUCTION OF MALT LIQUORS IN SWEDEN, 1905.

|                                        | Hectolitres. |
|----------------------------------------|--------------|
| Porter ... ..                          | 54,853       |
| Ordinary beers of all descriptions ... | 1,293,316    |
| Lagerdricka or Pilsnerdricka ...       | 183,892      |
| Svagdricka ... ..                      | 1,675,506    |

Now it is evident from these facts and figures that by far the greater part of the malt liquors consumed in Sweden have a very low alcoholic

\* In England the limit recognised by the Excise is 2 per cent. proof spirit, which is equal to about 1 per cent. of alcohol.



strength, and I must confess I do not quite understand how the Bolag party in Sweden, engaged in distributing among the people native brandy with an alcoholic strength of over 40 per cent., can attack the distributors of beers having a small percentage of alcohol, and accuse them of being the cause of drunkenness, following up this accusation by demands that the beer purveyors should be brought under the control of the native brandy purveyors in order to prevent them from doing any further harm !

What, I found, really happens, especially in Gothenburg city, is that men first of all go to the dram-shops, where (following up various drinks during the day) they get their two glasses of raw spirit, swallow these off at a gulp each, and then proceed to a beer-shop (there is always one in the neighbourhood of a Bolag bar), where a few bottles of beer may very well settle their case. The intoxication that follows is thereupon attributed to the beer ! I gained a good insight into the procedure one Friday evening in Gothenburg. Going to a Bolag bar at 6.15, I stood watching the people till 7, when no more bränvin was served. How many hundreds of workmen came up to the counter in that time, put down their money, swallowed off their liquor, and then went out again, I cannot say ; but hundreds there were, and, inasmuch as it is an admitted fact that 5,000 glasses of bränvin will be served at one of these bars on a busy day, the reader need not think I exaggerate. I noticed that many of the men had a difficulty in walking even as they entered, and at least 5 per cent. had evidently



already had as much liquor as was good for them, though the attendants were far too busy to notice the exact condition of each person able to stand erect at the bar as he put down his money. The maximum allowance per head was two glasses ; but I noticed one man who was seated at a table with a comrade put his own two glasses of bränvin, and also one of his companion's glasses, into a tumbler, add thereto about a tablespoonful of mineral water, and pour the whole lot down his throat. Having thus got their last drink of bränvin for the day, a considerable number of the Bolag patrons swelled the crowd in the beer-shop near at hand, with such results, in the case of a certain proportion, as one can imagine ; though to which particular type of liquor their final possible insobriety should be really attributed I leave the reader to decide.

One further learns in regard to this question of beer consumption in Sweden that it is a matter not only of the alcoholic strength of the beer, but the conditions under which the beverage itself is drunk. When the Swedish labourer has a bottle of beer, and a large one by choice—a small bottle he regards as scarcely worthy of his attention—he raises the bottle to his mouth and pours out the contents so that they will run straight down his throat, just as though he was pouring from one vessel into another. A gentleman in Gothenburg told me he had even seen a workman put two small bottles to his mouth and empty them simultaneously, the objection to a small bottle being thus overcome. A labourer will think nothing of imbibing four full bottles, in the



way described, in the course of fifteen or twenty minutes, and this might very well follow on such drams of bränvin as he had been able to get from the different Bolag bars during the day. The Swede, in fact, is a great believer in mixed drinks. It is quite common for him to order at the bars either one or two glasses of bränvin, and also a drink of small beer, pouring them down his throat in rapid succession—the bränvin first. Hardened toppers, who want an especially strong drink, will mix together bränvin, cognac, and Riga balsam, and empty the glass straight off. This is known in Swedish as 'släcka af,' which might be translated into English as 'damping down the fire'!

The crusade against beer inspired by the Bolag party in Sweden had the effect, in Gothenburg itself, of leading to the new regulations under which a considerable reduction was effected at the beginning of 1906 in the number of small shopkeepers selling beer for consumption off the premises. From inquiries I made I learned that at first these regulations resulted in a decrease of about 10 per cent. in the consumption of beer in Gothenburg, and it is assumed that people who could no longer buy bottled beer bought more of the bottled bränvin, in the sale of which practically no restrictions (except that not less than a litre can be bought) are practised. But now that the people are finding out the other shops where beer can still be purchased, the consumption, at the time of my visit, in September, was rapidly reverting to its normal proportions. The main effect of the regulations, therefore, was in



the prohibition of sale in houses which the police regarded with suspicion, and the transfer of custom to other houses in better neighbourhoods.

In Norway there is still less reason than in Sweden to attribute any increased drunkenness to increased beer-drinking, the higher duties—imposed in the interests of the revenue—having made beer too expensive a drink for the ordinary worker. In fact, the average consumption of beer per head of the population in Norway was less in 1904 than it had been in any year since 1872. It reached a maximum in the period 1896-1900, when the annual average was 20·3 litres per head, and from that time it steadily declined to 20·0 litres per head in 1901, 17·8 in 1902, 14·0 in 1903, and 13·1 in 1904. Concurrently, also, with this diminution in quantity, there has been a steadily increasing tendency in Norway to brew lighter beers, containing the smallest possible percentage of alcohol, consistently with the need of assuring the maintenance of good condition in a country where due regard must be paid to the difficulties and delays of transport. 'The human body,' said one Norwegian brewer to me, in the course of conversation on the subject, 'could not contain enough of the beer brewed by my firm to make a man drunk.'

The conclusion at which I arrived as the result of my investigations into this particular branch of the question was that, although a certain amount of drunkenness may be directly due to beer-drinking—especially as followed under Swedish conditions—the campaign now being actively



directed against beer by representatives of the company system is largely inspired by what is nothing less than trade jealousy towards a rival drink, and by the desire of municipal monopolists to add to the profits they already secure from the native brandy traffic those which might also be obtainable from a control of the supply of beer. The whole tendency is to form a huge Municipal Liquor Trust, which, while professing to maintain the purely philanthropic purposes with which the system originally started, is much more concerned to-day in securing the right to handle the profits. At present the independent sale of beer stands in the way of complete monopoly. So the 'company' leaders raise their cry that the drunkenness which prevails is due, not to the consumption of ardent spirits, but to the imbibing of what are mostly light beers, and they have evidently made up their minds not to rest content until they have got the beer traffic also under their control.



## CHAPTER VI

### TEMPERANCE v. TEETOTALISM

BETWEEN the temperance party in Scandinavia and the teetotal party in the United Kingdom and the United States there are differences that go to the very base of the temperance movement as a whole, and are likely to have an important bearing on the future of the liquor question in North-West Europe.

As already stated in Chapter I., the first temperance society in Norway, established in 1836, was one against brandy-drinking only, beer being regarded as a temperance drink. The movement succeeded so well that by the end of 1844 no fewer than 118 societies, with 14,000 members, had been established on the lines stated, these societies being then formed into a 'Norwegian Union against Brændevin-Drinking.' In 1859 a new movement, for the formation of societies whose members would be pledged to 'total abstinence from the use of alcoholic drinks of all kinds,' was started at Stavanger by a certain Quaker, Asbjörn Kloster, who was inspired thereto by English example. The State readily supported the former movement, and voted substantial sums to it from time to time for the purpose of propaganda against the widespread



brandy-drinking, then regarded as a national evil ; but when, in 1875, State aid was asked for on behalf of the 'total abstinence' societies, the Storthing at first refused, on the ground that it was the *abuse*, and not the *use*, of alcoholic drinks that was to be opposed. Later on, however, a compromise was effected, under which the teetotal as well as the other societies received Government support in their 'work for sobriety.'

The idea of 'total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages,' thus originally introduced from England, underwent further development later on as various English societies established national branches in Scandinavia ; but although a vigorous attempt was made to enforce the general observance of the principle in question, it became more and more evident as time went on that, alike in Norway and Sweden, the majority of people joining the temperance movement were disposed to follow the example of the Norwegian Storthing in making a distinction between the 'use' and the 'abuse' of alcoholic beverages. In other words, while they were prepared to abstain from spirituous liquors which might readily produce intoxication, they saw no reason why they should abstain, also, from malt liquors which were of so light a character that they could not hurt anyone. They refrained from regarding alcohol as a sort of bogey ; they said, rather : 'We must have beverages of some sort other than water, lemonade, or coffee ; and if we can depend on getting wholesome malt liquors, containing only such proportion of alcohol as will not be likely to produce inebriety or be otherwise harmful, we



are quite prepared to take them and consider ourselves practical supporters of "temperance" all the same.'

It is on these lines that the temperance movement in Scandinavia has made its chief advance of late years. Opinion is certainly not unanimous on the subject, and there are still many individual members who adhere rigidly to 'total abstinence'; but the tendency is more and more for light malt liquors to be regarded as permissible temperance drinks, however pronounced the continued hostility to spirits and wines in any shape or form. The subject has been repeatedly discussed by the societies, and, although the local representatives of English teetotalism have struggled to maintain their prejudices intact, the Scandinavian idea has generally carried the day. Some of the societies still require that the formal consent of their Executive shall be obtained before the members of any particular branch are allowed to turn from absolute teetotalism to a temperate consumption of light beers; but the principle is now so widely recognised that, as a rule, no difficulty in obtaining official approval is likely to be experienced.

The one point upon which difference of opinion may and does arise in Norway is the precise amount of alcohol which beers regarded as suitable for consumption by 'temperance' people may properly contain. So far as I could gather from my inquiries in Christiania, the Norwegian temperance societies are divided mainly into two parties on this question: one group allow their members to drink beer which does not contain more than 2 per cent. of alcohol, while a smaller



group will not go beyond certain beers which contain only six-tenths of 1 per cent. of alcohol.

But the six-tenths party, it seems, has not arbitrarily fixed upon that limit for all time. It is prepared to go further, under certain conditions. I had the opportunity of meeting a prominent member of this party, and he put the matter to me very clearly—from his point of view. He said, in effect :

‘So long as there is a spirituous liquor like brændevin readily obtainable, we must be on our guard against allowing people to acquire any such taste for alcoholic beverages as might lead them on to the consumption of spirits. But if we should succeed, by means of local option, in driving brændevin and other such spirituous liquors off the field, we should at once look with a more favourable eye on light malt beverages, because the danger in question would then be non-existent. There would no longer be the same necessity to keep to the six-tenths limit.’

Another ardent advocate of sobriety said to me in Christiania :

‘When I am on the public platform I certainly proclaim the doctrine of abstinence, but it is perfectly well understood that I do not include therein the light beers of the country, which are practically not regarded as intoxicating drinks at all. If I attend a temperance social function I call for those beers quite openly, and everyone regards it as a matter of course that I should drink them.’

Considering that the ‘temperance cause’ in Norway, mainly based on the principles here described, claims to have about 180,000 adherents (exclusive of children), or 12 per cent. of the entire population over fifteen years of age



(though not all actually members of temperance societies), there is here a substantial body of public opinion in a comparatively small country. To meet the views thus entertained in regard to the consumption of light beers, the brewery firms in Norway have specially applied themselves to the production of beers possessing a low alcoholic strength, and suitable for consumption by temperance people, under the limits stated. On inquiry among the leading brewers in Christiania, I found they were making quite a number of palatable beers, having a low percentage of alcohol, and I was also shown some that was 'alcohol free'; but this represented a somewhat 'dead' drink, not likely to prove so acceptable as the others. The output of these temperance beers is steadily growing, and one of the absurdities of the situation is that, when the figures relating to them are added to the national statistics, the Samlag party should profess alarm at the 'increased consumption of beer,' should attribute thereto any increase in drunkenness, and should, as dealers in brændevin, seek, in the interests of sobriety, to be allowed to take charge also of the sale of beer!

As regards beers which are beyond the 'temperance' limit, I could obtain no confirmation of a statement I had read, that beers were being brewed in Norway of extra strength to suit the taste of people who were discarding brændevin in favour of such liquors. On the contrary, I found an almost general tendency towards the brewing of lighter beers than before. One firm, for instance, showed me a beer which, a few years



ago, they produced with from 8 to 10 per cent. of alcohol, whereas it now contained only 4 per cent.

In Sweden, Peter Wieselgren, Dean of Gothenburg, and original founder of the Gothenburg System, started his propaganda in his younger days by establishing a 'total abstinence' society, and even when his 'system' began to assume shape and form he continued to preach total abstinence from both beer and spirits, although it was only the latter that the system undertook to control. As in Norway, the Swedish temperance reformers who were inspired by English ideas conducted their campaign against both types of beverages; but, again as in Norway, cold-water principles were found to be altogether impracticable in regard to the great body of the working classes, and the formal recognition of light beers as temperance drinks gained wide acceptance among the Swedish temperance societies, the ideas of the teetotal extremists falling more and more into the background.

The practical wisdom of the policy thus adopted is undeniable. Swedish workers regard *svagdricka* (sold to them by women who have special stalls for the purpose in the factories) as really indispensable in their daily toil, and not only have the temperance societies formally sanctioned the drinking thereof by their members, but they have recently combined to secure from the Swedish Parliament greater facilities for the sale of this 'temperance,' though still alcoholic, drink.



Svagdricka, however, is only one of a number of malt liquors which are recognised as suitable for consumption by abstainers from spirits, and there are now about ten varieties of such malt beverages on the Swedish liquor market. In Gothenburg alone the temperance societies, operating on this basis, have a membership of between 11,000 and 12,000; but one may be absolutely certain that no such numbers would have been secured if the societies had sought to enforce a pledge of total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages, however small and harmless the amount of alcohol they contained. It may be a 'half-measure,' from the point of view of the English and American societies, but it has recognised the actualities of the situation, it has avoided the difficulties (especially great in Scandinavia) of enforcing extreme ideas, and it has, undoubtedly, tended to promote such sobriety as may still be found among the Swedish working classes.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE COPENHAGEN SYSTEM

It was not until I went on to Denmark, after concluding my inquiries in Norway and Sweden, that I became acquainted with what I think may deservedly be called 'the Copenhagen System,' since it was there that it originally began. Not that there is any idea of rivalry with the 'Gothenburg System.' Indeed, the workers in Copenhagen are so extremely modest and unassuming in their ideas that up to the present they have not even adopted the word 'system' at all. I doubt if they fully realize that they have started a movement which promises to bring about some approach to a social revolution in the habits and customs of their fellow-countrymen, a movement that, in my humble judgment, is far more deserving of the attention of practical reformers of to-day than the much lauded *and* the much criticised system which takes its name from the city of Gothenburg.

The Copenhagen System, as organized by the temperance societies of the city, is based primarily on that principle of recognising light beers as temperance drinks to which I referred in the previous chapter; but it goes much further than



that. It recognises also the social instincts of our common humanity.

The failure to do this constitutes one of the weakest features in the Gothenburg System, especially as enforced in Norway. The Bolag or Samlag drinking-bars are avowedly simply places where men can go to satisfy the purely physical sensation of thirst. With the sole exception of the money payment, they perform just the same rôle for their patrons that the water-trough in the street does for horses and cattle. Men come in, get their drink, swallow it off, and are then expected to go their way, just as the horses and the cattle move on from the trough as soon as they have had their fill. In Norway there is even a great reluctance to provide seats, lest the men may be tempted to stay and talk to one another, and in both countries the hours of closing are abnormally early.

Unlike the Gothenburg System, the Copenhagen System sees in human beings something more than purely physical or animal wants, and it aims at providing establishments where a maximum of possible social enjoyment can be obtained, with the help, not merely of aerated waters, but also of light beers of the kind already described. Hence the establishments known under a name which, literally translated, means 'Temperance Home.' Speaking generally, such a home provides (1) a series of comfortably furnished rooms, with bars at which light beers, aerated waters, coffee, chocolate, tea, sandwiches, cakes, etc., can be obtained; (2) other rooms where well-cooked meals at 'popular prices' are



served ; (3) billiard-rooms ; and (4) a series of rooms, small and large, where the local societies or branches can hold their meetings, where dances, concerts, and social gatherings can take place, and where, also, amateur theatrical performances can be given, some of the larger rooms (capable of accommodating from 500 to 600 or more persons) being provided with stages for this purpose. Most of the larger rooms, and some also of the smaller, are furnished with pianos.

The first of these establishments was not started in Copenhagen until about six or seven years ago, and there are now seven of them in different parts of the city. Of those I visited, one had cost £9,500 to construct, and another had cost £11,000. The bulk of the necessary capital for the erection of such houses can readily be borrowed from the local banks, which seem to have acquired great confidence in the system. The houses have, in fact, proved to be thoroughly self-supporting, the receipts from the beverages and food supplied, and also from the hire of the meeting or assembly rooms by the local societies, leaving a modest balance of profit after defraying all charges. At one house I found that no fewer than thirty-six local societies or branches held their regular meetings on the premises, certain rooms being allotted to them on specified days of the week. I was invited to attend one of these meetings—a gathering of the local branch of the Blue Ribbon Army—and I regret that indisposition, following on a chill I had contracted at Gothenburg, prevented me from



attending. But I heard next day that the proceedings had begun at 8.30 with a business meeting ; that this was followed by refreshments in the form of light beers, coffee, chocolate (mostly favoured by the ladies), sandwiches, etc. ; that a concert came next, and that there was a dance to finish up with, the last of the departures being at 12 midnight.

Gatherings of this type—in combination with the other advantages offered by the establishments in question—are, I was assured, having a powerful effect in promoting the social welfare of the people, and especially among the working classes, to whom they directly appeal. Men could bring their wives and children with a certainty of much real enjoyment, and without any attendant drawbacks ; and though they naturally were not able to get spirits or wines, there was (as I learned from the manager of one of the houses) a choice of no fewer than ten light beers offered to them, in addition to coffee, aerated waters, fruit syrups, etc.

The superiority of these Copenhagen establishments over the Gothenburg System liquor-bars is undeniable. Men go to them from curiosity ; they like the 'life' and the comfort of the place ; they join one or other of the societies, and they give up spirit-drinking the more readily because they are allowed to take as much as they want of harmless and palatable beer. So far has the movement spread that, although it was started only so recently, there is now an 'Afholdshjem,' or 'Temperance Home,' on the lines here indicated, in every town



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throughout Denmark, while in villages where the population is too poor to allow of special houses being set apart for the purpose the local schools are utilized.

Conducted in accordance with these principles, the temperance movement is making much progress in Denmark. The various societies, twenty-seven in number (exclusive of local lodges), had an increase in membership during 1905 of over 11,000, the present total, in a country of 2,600,000 inhabitants, being close on 150,000. But, although they have about seventy supporters in the Danish Parliament, they seem to have no political programme. On inquiring as to the nature of such programme, which I naturally assumed to exist, I was told : ' We haven't got one. All we have asked for at present is that the Government should give us a contribution towards the cost of setting up a home for inebriates.' A temperance party which does not worry the national Parliament for all sorts of coercive measures, but quietly sets about doing all it can to promote sobriety on the broadest and most common-sense lines, is, surely, deserving of no inconsiderable measure of respect.

In carrying out the general policy I have here sought to describe, the Danish temperance party have had the active co-operation of the brewers. It was about ten years ago that leading members of the said party, recognising the hopelessness of promoting their cause so long as the doctrine of ' total abstinence ' from all alcoholic beverages was alone maintained, got into communication



with some of the chief brewery firms, and consulted with them as to the possibility of producing malt liquors of such alcoholic strength that, while satisfying the palate, they would not be likely to cause intoxication. The result of these consultations was that the brewery firms undertook to place on the market beers of a type that would fully meet the requirements of the party. This they have done, adding fresh varieties from time to time, so that there are now, as already indicated, no fewer than ten kinds of beer manufactured in Copenhagen which come within the limits of alcoholic strength laid down by the temperance party.

These limits were more clearly defined, and the position of the brewers in the matter was made all the stronger, by the fact that in Denmark beer which contains not more than  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. (weight) of alcohol pays no duty to the Government, while a duty of 9 kronor per barrel of 140 litres is imposed on beer containing more than that percentage of alcohol, though no beer having more than 6 per cent. of alcohol may be brewed in Denmark.

The brewers had a double incentive offered them—the possibility of a new market, and the increased supply of light beers on which no duty would have to be paid. They thus readily entered into an agreement with the temperance party, and from that time the production of light beers of the variety in question has undergone great development in Denmark. I was even able, at Copenhagen, to visit a ‘temperance brewery,’ where beers for Danish



temperance people are exclusively produced; and although this particular brewery was not of especially large dimensions, I learned that the output, in the small bottles (holding  $\frac{1}{3}$  litre) in which such beers are sold, had increased from less than a quarter of a million in 1895 to nearly 17,000,000 in 1905.

One striking effect of these various conditions in Denmark is that, without the passing of any coercive measures by the Danish Parliament, at the bidding of the temperance or any other party, and without the inauguration of any 'system' for controlling the sale of spirits, as in Sweden and Norway, the consumption of spirits is declining, while beer, and especially duty-free, light beer, is taking their place. This, at least, is the conclusion pointed to by the table on p. 95, which I have put together from the reports of the British Consul at Copenhagen.

Comparing 1893 with 1905, it will be seen that spirits have undergone a decrease, and that strong beers show an increase of only 3,500,000 gallons, whereas the duty-free, light beers have increased by over 7,500,000 gallons.

To understand aright the full significance of these figures, one must bear in mind that Denmark is credited with a greater consumption of spirits (though not of alcoholic drinks in general) per head of the population than any other country in the world. It is not that the Danes are heavy drinkers of spirits. They have been in the habit rather of taking them in small quantities, but at comparatively frequent intervals, so that, although they have maintained



PRODUCTION OF SPIRITS AND BEER IN  
DENMARK.

| Year.    | Spirits<br>(14·3 Under<br>Proof). | Beer.                                                              |                                                                       |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                                   | Taxed Amount<br>of Spirit being<br>over 2½ per Cent.<br>of Weight. | Untaxed Amount<br>of Spirit being<br>under 2½ per Cent.<br>of Weight. |
|          | Gallons.                          | Gallons.                                                           | Gallons.                                                              |
| 1893 ... | 7,176,290                         | 16,021,717                                                         | 26,637,457                                                            |
| 1894 ... | 6,894,557                         | 17,025,180                                                         | 27,304,544                                                            |
| 1895 ... | 7,018,616                         | 17,785,091                                                         | 27,629,779                                                            |
| 1896 ... | 7,389,639                         | 19,589,674                                                         | 28,725,196                                                            |
| 1897 ... | 7,117,019                         | 20,601,368                                                         | 29,936,758                                                            |
| 1898 ... | 6,973,355                         | 21,141,532                                                         | 30,177,762                                                            |
| 1899 ... | 7,442,365                         | 22,451,655                                                         | 32,392,913                                                            |
| 1900 ... | 7,035,949                         | 21,948,157                                                         | 32,671,922                                                            |
| 1901 ... | 7,339,628                         | 23,103,488                                                         | 32,126,258                                                            |
| 1902 ... | 7,508,968                         | 20,470,665                                                         | 33,063,625                                                            |
| 1903 ... | 7,029,167                         | 20,576,486                                                         | 32,217,260                                                            |
| 1904 ... | 6,623,088                         | 21,184,065                                                         | 33,489,780                                                            |
| 1905 ... | 6,959,010                         | 19,550,321                                                         | 34,292,529                                                            |

sobriety, they have considerably swollen the national statistics. Another factor which has greatly tended to increase consumption is the extremely low duty that is imposed on native brandy (brændevin, distilled from maize and barley) in Denmark, that duty being only 18 öre per pot (about 1 litre), reduced to 100 per cent. alcohol, as against 232 öre in Norway, and still higher amounts in England and the United States. Political reasons, however, have prevented the increase of this duty (as suggested from time to time) successive Governments



having been afraid to interfere with the so-called 'poor man's schnaps.'

The economic situation has thus been left to work out its own salvation, and in effect spirit-drinking has been going more and more 'out of fashion' in Denmark of late years, as one authority assured me. That is certainly the case 'in society,' while the Danish agriculturists, who at one time thought it necessary to give their labourers brændevin twice a day at their meals as a precaution against climatic influences, now offer them money instead, and the men are quite satisfied with the change. This latter practice has especially come into vogue since the spread throughout the rural districts of temperance homes and temperance beers, and one sanguine Dane, who had supplemented his personal knowledge of what was going on in the country by a study of the official returns of consumption, assured me that he was looking forward to the day when spirit-drinking would be almost extinct, and Denmark's reputation for sobriety would be even greater than it is already.

Here I come to an apparent anomaly which is especially deserving of the attention of economists and would-be reformers. Denmark is a great consumer of alcoholic beverages, but is a country where one seldom sees a drunken man. The comparative rarity of drunkenness in the agricultural districts is, of course, accounted for by the fact that the consumption, though leading to a large annual total, is so distributed as not to produce inebriety. But in the case



of Copenhagen there are conditions which might seem calculated to lead to an altogether abnormal amount of drunkenness. In this eminently pleasure-loving city of 500,000 inhabitants there are no fewer than 3,577 places where alcoholic beverages may be obtained for consumption either on or off the premises. Included in the former category are 461 hotels and inns, 670 public-houses and beershops, 84 restaurants, and 11 confectioners, while among the places where liquor can be obtained for consumption off the premises are the shops of 2,197 grocers. Then the hotels, public-houses, restaurants, and beer-shops are all allowed to remain open until one o'clock in the morning (certain of the leading places being further permitted to retain until 3 a.m. persons who were already in the house at 1 a.m.), while the hours on Sunday are the same as on other days of the week.

The consequences ought to be positively alarming from the point of view of the ordinary teetotal advocate in England. But a very large proportion of the liquor consumed is beer, and the greater quantity of this belongs to the exceptionally light qualities, which would not intoxicate any ordinary person. Then, in regard to spirits, there is no need whatever for the working man in Copenhagen to buy a bottle on the Saturday to last him over Sunday, because he knows that if he should want a drink at any hour of the day—even on Sunday—he will be able to get it without any difficulty. Hence there is no huge retail trade in spirits done with the working classes of Copenhagen, as in



Göteborg and Christiania. There is no need for them to resort to illicit drinking in private houses, woods, or sly-grog shops; nor is there any incentive to drink pernicious substitutes for 'controlled' liquors.

These last-mentioned considerations, therefore, must be set against the former, and, in the result, we get this remarkable fact—that whereas the arrests for drunkenness per thousand of the population in the 'system'-controlled cities of Göteborg and Christiania in 1905 were fifty-two and forty-three respectively, the corresponding arrests in Copenhagen for the same year were only sixteen per thousand of the population. In 1904, and also in 1903, the proportion of arrests was seventeen per thousand; in 1902 it was sixteen per thousand; and in 1901 it was fifteen. Earlier figures would be of no value for the purposes of comparison, because of changes made in recent years in the city boundaries.

On my asking one of the temperance workers in Copenhagen what his views were on the subject of local option and prohibition, he replied:

'I should like to see local option adopted in regard to the sale of spirits in the rural districts; but, personally, I do not agree with those who would attempt to enforce prohibition in the urban centres, and if it came to voting on the question of license or no license in the towns, I should certainly vote for license. I spent some years of my early life in the United States of America, and what I saw there convinced me that prohibition in large centres of population is not only impracticable, but leads to greater evils than those it seeks to avoid. My experience was that in the so-called Prohibition States there was more drinking and more drunkenness than anywhere else. In



one town in Massachusetts where I lived for some time prohibition was supposed to be supreme, but the people drank like Hell! All who wanted liquor knew where to get it, and some of them seemed to drink out of "pure cussedness" (if I may use an Americanism), simply because it was unlawful. Temperance advocate though I am, I should be sorry to see any attempt to enforce a no-license policy in Copenhagen. It is the same with the drink as it is with boys and apples. Place an apple on the sideboard, and forbid a boy to touch it, he longs for the fruit, and will not be satisfied until he has eaten it, while if you leave a large basket of apples in the room, and allow him to help himself whenever he pleases, he will probably not touch them at all. So it is in regard to liquor in Copenhagen. People here have every facility to get what they want, and they take just what they require, and no more. Place difficulties in their way, and they would probably take a delight in increasing their consumption. Leave them free to get brandy when and where they please, instead of trying to control the sale, and, as you have seen, they show the greater inclination to take to light beer instead. These are reasons enough, even from a temperance point of view, for not seeking to enforce prohibition. But there is still another: Copenhagen is a city visited by many foreigners, who spend their money freely among us, and whose personal requirements we ought to consider in return. Why should we, for purely domestic reasons—in themselves more or less impracticable—seek to put difficulties in the way of our visitors getting what they want (provided they do not abuse the privilege), and render our city less attractive to those who come here from all parts of the world?

This is an argument which may be more especially recommended to the notice of the authorities of Christiania and Bergen. What is being done at Copenhagen is that, under a new Municipal Law, expected to come into force in 1907, no new licenses will be issued to places



that do not fulfil the requirements of the Health Committee in regard to air-space, ventilation, etc., nor will any transfer of existing licenses be allowed in respect to places which fail to meet the same requirements. Under these regulations it is expected that a number of the cellar or basement taverns in Copenhagen will be weeded out; but this is about as far as 'prohibition' in that city is likely to go.

Judged by actual results, the outcome of the Copenhagen System compares most favourably with that of the Gothenburg System. The one tends to increased sobriety much more than the other, and it shows, at the same time, a greater regard for the liberty of the subject. The representatives of the Gothenburg System admit that they constitute what they call 'a beneficent despotism.' Within the strict limitation of their powers they are absolute autocrats over their fellow-men; and I must confess that, however beneficent the intentions may be, the exercise of such despotism or autocracy by salaried officers in the name of philanthropy—but on strictly business lines—with a steadfast eye to the ultimate profits, is not a sight over which those who are possessed of any respect for personal freedom can rejoice. It is true that in Denmark the profits are not available for rate reduction, or for public improvements and charities, the cost of the maintenance of which thus falls on the community; but Denmark is saved the spectacle of a scramble among the different authorities—State and municipal, rural and urban—for the money got out of the pockets of working men



whose interests it is professed to safeguard; while no consideration of 'public gain' from the consumption of native brandy is likely, in Denmark, to check the increasing use of those light malt beverages, the substitution of which for the stronger liquors cannot fail further to promote the sobriety of the people.

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Whilst the present volume is passing through the press, I have received a letter from the manager of the famous Carlsberg breweries at Copenhagen, who writes :

'We brew two kinds of temperance beer, a light and a dark, the latter containing somewhat more extract than the former. In each case we brew on the sedimentary fermentation principle (instead of surface fermentation, as adopted elsewhere), the product being thus totally fermented before it leaves the brewery. In the few years that these beers have been on the market the sales have reached about 750,000 gallons, and this autumn has seen a further substantial increase.'



## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE conclusions at which I have arrived may be summarized as follows :

1. That there is no possible analogy between the conditions which led to the inauguration of the Gothenburg System in Sweden and Norway (where, following mainly on the indiscretions of rulers and Governments, the entire populace had given itself up to the drinking of native spirits) and the existing conditions in England (where the national beverage is beer).

2. That the success claimed for the Gothenburg System, as already applied in Sweden and Norway, is mainly based on inferences drawn from incomplete statistics, especially in regard to alleged decline in consumption, such statistics relating only to sales by the particular company, and leaving out of account the very large and obviously increasing sales by retail merchants or in other directions.

3. That the effect of restrictions on the bar trade is less to decrease the total consumption than to lead people to purchase by the bottle or the half-bottle over the retail counter, and that the sales in this direction are increasing out of



all proportion to any possible decline in the business done at the bars.

4. That further results of the same policy are (*a*) much secret drinking, and (*b*) the substitution of vile and most harmful substitutes for genuine spirits.

5. That the statistics of drunkenness in the two countries, high as they are, probably do not represent anything like the actual amount thereof, owing to the fact that so much of the drinking goes on in private, where those affected would not come under the observation of the police.

6. That the enforcement of the Gothenburg System involves interferences with personal liberty and the establishment of a class legislation which would be intolerable to the English people.

7. That, except in regard to early closing (which, however, seems to have little or no effect on the total consumption), the system of control is in no way superior to the very strict supervision exercised by brewing companies over their 'tenanted' or 'managed' houses in England, while the bar-rooms themselves, however superior to previously existing public-houses in Sweden and Norway, are not even equal to the average types of public-house property in England.

8. That, whilst the system was originally started with the best of motives, it has developed mainly into an attempt to secure the profits of the business for State or local purposes, so as to effect a direct saving to the pockets of members of the community.

9. That, to this end, while there is much talk



about restrictions, good care is taken (especially in Sweden) that the business is worked on thoroughly business lines.

10. That, owing to the acuteness of the scramble for the profits, the system has had to be reorganized in each country, so as to spread the distribution over a larger area, and give the towns less direct interest in the financial success of the enterprise.

11. That the whole business is assuming the proportions of a huge Municipal Trust, which already has its periodical national conferences of managers to decide on the lines on which the business can best be conducted.

12. That the reproduction of any such Trust in this country would involve an interference both with personal liberty and with national finances which, apart from the questions of principle involved, would be in no way warranted by such very dubious success as that which is claimed for the system in Sweden and Norway.

My first recommendation is to the British public, and is to the effect that they would do well to trouble no further about the Gothenburg System, but to study the Copenhagen System instead. The latter came to me as a revelation, for I had neither read nor heard of it before, though a previous study of Danish agricultural conditions had quite prepared me for any further example of the practical common-sense of that plucky and enterprising little nation. The way in which, without any demand for State interference, and without any cry for heroic changes in licensing laws so liberal that they amount



almost to free trade in liquor, the Danish societies just set quietly to work to convert the people from the use of ardent spirits to that of light and palatable beer, as the most practical and the most effective temperance measure of which they could think, is an example for the nations that is quite as much deserving of attention as any of Denmark's earlier achievements in the way of agricultural organization.

My second recommendation is addressed to members of the temperance societies of Great Britain, who, I think, would do well to follow the example of the societies in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and other Continental countries, and, in the interests of genuine 'temperance' rather than of extreme teetotalism,\* make a distinction between spirits containing a considerable percentage of alcohol and malt liquors which have only a small percentage thereof. In effect their members do, already, 'take' alcohol. Ginger ale, for example, a well-recognised temperance drink, is a fermented liquor containing (besides chemicals) 2 per cent. of proof spirit; while in the report of Dr. Thorpe, the principal chemist of

\* The real meaning of the word 'temperance' is 'moderation.' If we say of a man that he is temperate in speaking, we do not imply that he abstains from speech, but that he shows moderation therein. Nor, when told that a person is temperate in eating, do we assume that he has left off taking food. If the one be 'a moderate speaker' and the other 'a moderate eater,' then the 'temperance' advocate in regard to beverages should be 'a moderate drinker.' In effect, total abstainers may be teetotallers, but they cannot, properly speaking, be described as 'temperance' people.



the Government Laboratory, on the work of the Laboratory during the year ended March 31, 1906, there is the following paragraph :

‘HERB BEERS AND OTHER BEVERAGES SOLD AS “TEMPERANCE” DRINKS.—Nine hundred and twenty-four samples of ginger, herb, and botanic beers were purchased in various parts of the country to ascertain if the proof spirit present was within the legal limit of 2 per cent. It was found that 349 contained spirit in excess of the legal limit, and of these 58 contained 3 but less than 4 per cent. of proof spirit, 35 contained 4 but less than 6 per cent. of proof spirit, and 8 contained 6 or more, the highest containing 9·5 per cent. of proof spirit.’

One must conclude from this that the very individuals who are most keen in raising the bogey of alcohol, and who seek to frighten people, and especially school-children, into the belief that the imbibing of liquids containing even the smallest amount of alcohol will do them incalculable harm, are themselves systematically taking alcohol under such guises as ‘ginger ale,’ ‘hop ale,’ ‘oatmeal ale,’ ‘treacle beer,’ ‘spruce beer,’ ‘stone ginger beer,’ ‘dandelion stout,’ and so on. Thus the whole question really resolves itself into one of degree. It would be pleaded in defence of these temperance drinks that ‘the amount of alcohol they contain would not hurt anyone’; but that is precisely what the temperance drinkers of light beers on the Continent say of the beverages they take. Fundamentally the point of view is the same in each case, the difference being that the English teetotaller, while accepting what are really alcoholic drinks if called by a fancy name, tabooes ‘beer,’ irrespec-



tive of its alcoholic strength, simply because it is beer. The actual position, therefore, is one of prejudice rather than of principle, and this attitude is the more open to question because it handicaps the progress of a real 'sobriety' movement, as distinct from an extreme 'total abstinence' movement, though the name given to the latter, judging from Dr. Thorpe's report, is a complete misnomer. Looking again to the Continent, one finds that the temperance societies there, co-operating with the brewers, secure for, and even supply to, their members what is understood to be a distinct want in teetotal circles in the United Kingdom—palatable but harmless beverages other than the so-called 'mineral waters,' and suitable for all possible occasions. Thanks to this broad-minded policy, the societies in question are making substantial advance, alike in their own numbers and in the cause of national sobriety; whilst the teetotal societies in England are showing little progress at all, and are ever looking to Parliament to 'do something' for them. It is, of course, too much to expect that the English societies will be prepared at once to effect so radical a change in their policy merely on the strength of the statements here made. But what I strongly advise them to do is, instead of sending any more deputations to Gothenburg or Christiania, to delegate some of the most liberal-minded of their members to go to Copenhagen and study thoroughly what is taking place there—and also throughout Denmark—seeing the establishments provided by the Danish societies for their



light-beer-drinking members, and comparing the social life going on there with the cold platitudes of an ordinary 'temperance hall' in England. That they will at least get a cordial welcome from the Danish societies, I can already assure them ; for when I mentioned in Copenhagen what I intended to recommend on my return to England, there was an immediate response : ' Yes, do tell them that ; and let the English people know that we shall be delighted to welcome as many of them as care to come over and see what we are doing.'

My third and last recommendation is addressed to the British Government, and it is that they, too, should study Scandinavian conditions, and learn therefrom the important lesson that the sobriety of a nation is much more likely to be promoted by encouraging the consumption of light and harmless beverages, of a kind acceptable to the people at large, than by merely seeking to enforce oppressive and coercive measures on either consumers or suppliers.



## APPENDIX

### ABUSES OF THE COMPANY SYSTEM

ON the subject of the abuses which have arisen from time to time in the 'company' system of licensing, I quote the following from an article on 'The Liquor Traffic in Sweden and Norway,' by Mr. W. E. Johnson, published in *The New Voice* (Chicago), April 12, 1900 :

When it became noised abroad that one could not sell spirituous liquor unless he was a 'philanthropist,' a great crop of this species sprang up all over Sweden. In a multitude of cases these gentlemen were nothing but old-time rum-sellers or local politicians. This philanthropist nuisance has been threshed out over and over again in the Swedish Diet ever since the year 1873, when the Bolag was just coming into notice. Finally, the scandal became so unbearable that, in 1893, the Diet adopted an address to the King, asking that he advise measures to check the multiplying abuses of the philanthropists. But the difficulty lay in the fact that the King was a philanthropist himself, and had a big grog establishment in his own cellar.

On May 4, 1894, the doings of the philanthropists were made the subject of a committee report in the Diet, in which the chairman, Baron Bonde, reviewed some of the cases of crookedness.

A number of philanthropists had been (as a company)



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renting property from themselves (as individuals) at an exorbitant rental.

In some cases the Bolag had rented the cellars of town halls or other unused municipal property, in order that the town could swallow up a disproportionate share of the profits.

The philanthropists at Skofde were paying 9,000 kronor for property which they did not want, and which they sublet for 50 cents on the dollar.

According to the investigations made by the committee, some of the Bolags consisted of but a single philanthropist; while in other cases the good man took in his book-keeper or bar-tender as a partner, so that he would not be lonesome.

Fourteen of the Bolags had but three shareholders, one of which was the Bolag at Gefle, a city of 25,000 inhabitants.

Of the eighty-seven Bolags then in existence, twenty-one were joint-stock companies, while the other sixty-six were ordinary trading companies under the Swedish law.

Of these trading companies, one-third was composed of not more than three philanthropists, and two-thirds of them had less than eight.

The directors of the Bolags at Kalmar, Oskarshamn, and Karlshamn were being paid a commission of from 6 to 10 per cent. on all sales.

At Ronneby the chairman of the board of directors of the philanthropic Bolag received 800 kronor per year, and a commission of 2 per cent. on all sales.

At Stromstad the chairman got 500 kronor per year and 5 per cent. of the net profits.

At Skara the manager was given a comfortable salary of 2,000 kronor and 10 per cent. of all net profits exceeding 20,000 kronor.

At Marstrand the manager was paid a certain amount on each litre sold.

The manager at Vestervik received a salary and commission based on the cost of liquor sold.

Some of the directors had arranged to pay for the



liquors with their private cheques, and were receiving a 'discount,' or 'commission,' or 'interest.'

Some of the companies retained a part of the profits, which they used as capital stock, and then collected a dividend on the capital stock.

Forty-seven of the Bolags were renting their premises from the municipality at an exorbitant rental.

Corrupt juggling of rentals by the philanthropists were developed at Sodertlege, Norrkoping, Vexio, Skara, and Vimmeroy.

The philanthropists at Norrtlege, Enkoping, Ljungby, Eslof, Kongelf, and Lund peddled out to saloon-keepers all their licenses, thus becoming merely monopolist brokers of permits to sell liquor.

One of the Bolags was found to be renting all of its premises from one of the shareholders.

Some of the companies compelled the manager to provide his own premises and recoup himself by a commission.

Thirty-four of the Bolags had peddled out all their bar licenses, retaining only the bottle trade.

Different Bolags paid different prices for the same stuff. 'Commissions' and 'rake offs' were openly discussed.

The Bolag philanthropists were sending agents and canvassers into the Prohibition districts to dispose of their goods.

Some of the philanthropists sold liquor cheaper at Christmas-time in order to stimulate trade. . . .

The crookedness of the philanthropists in the operation of their Bolags resulted in the law passed by the Diet in 1895, in which the town councils were forbidden to entrust their liquor business to Bolags having less than twelve stockholders. The dividends were limited to 5 per cent., the sending out of agents and canvassers was forbidden, the payment of commissions to managers was prohibited, and the practice of renting premises from interested parties was legislated against.



DRUNKENNESS DECLINES: IMMOR-  
ALITY INCREASES

Dr. Ernst Almquist, Professor of Hygiene at Stockholm, in a paper contributed to the *Hygienischen Rundschau* on the temperance movement, declared himself in favour of 'absolute abstinence,' but explained that by an absolute abstainer he meant a person who took beverages which did not contain more than 1 per cent. of alcohol. In concluding his paper, the professor said he was bound to admit that, among the various stimulants which had been indulged in by the human race, alcohol must certainly be regarded as a 'mild' one, and he thought it would be in the highest degree unfortunate if alcohol were to be exchanged for some other form of stimulant, such as morphia. He continued:

'There are already signs pointing in this direction. Some persons who leave off alcohol become slaves to other vices which are no better. The greatest danger which threatens the Northern people at the present moment is increasing unchastity. In provinces which have experienced a perceptible decline in drunkenness there has been a rapid increase in immorality. The latter, of course, cannot be attributed merely to a misuse of alcohol, though from the point of view of health and working power it does at least as much harm as alcohol.'

'FRUITS OF FANATICISM' IN  
NORWAY

In an article published in the *Münchener Nuesten Nachrichten* in 1905, on the results



of the teetotal movement in Norway, it was stated :

‘There is no room whatever for doubt that the short-sighted policy of the prohibitionists has had the effect of bringing about, to an extraordinary extent, the abuse, alike in public and in private, of morphia. An unmistakable indication of this tendency is offered by the generally recognised fact that, as the direct result of the stricter administration of the laws controlling the sale of alcohol among the labouring classes, there has been a striking increase in the consumption of ether; and the question has on several occasions been considered whether greater restrictions should not be imposed on the dealers holding concessions from the State who sell large quantities of ether, under the popular designation of “naphtha,” more especially on the weekly pay-days of the workers. Reflective persons, versed in social politics, will find here a new proof of the old experience—that to seek to overcome national habits by force is, generally speaking, equivalent to driving out the devil with the help of Beelzebub.

‘In regard, also, to the consumption of morphia, various measures have been proposed; but it is generally considered that they cannot be enforced if the people are resolved not to observe them. No less would be the difficulty of fighting the evil by administrative action; for in the immediate vicinity of the shops recognised by the law there are dens the occupants of which, carrying on the business in secrecy, know well how to evade the authorities. Some of these individuals even have a staff of agents whose sole occupation consists in pandering to the cravings of the morphia-loving public, either in the capital or in the provinces. This illicit business is generally conducted with the help of large wholesale firms in other countries—especially England—and those engaged in it vie with one another in the subterfuges they resort to in order to get the morphia into the country without attracting attention.’



## THE COMPANY SYSTEM IN FINLAND

Some results of the company system in Finland, where local 'philanthropists' have taken charge of the liquor traffic in the towns on the usual basis of 5 per cent. for the shareholders and devotion of net profits to public purposes, with an especially strict control of the sales, are thus described in an article published during 1904 in the *Tageszeitung für Brauerei*, in regard to the conditions at Tammerfors, where there is a population of 40,000 persons, including 25,000 who belong to the working class :

'The people drink denaturalized spirit. The very smell of it should be enough ; those who must take it may regard themselves as put to the rack. Here, in Tammerfors, it is consumed in large quantities. Even French polish (" Politurlack ") is resorted to, and this not infrequently, so that numbers of persons who have drunk either the denaturalized spirit or the polish go to the hospitals for treatment on account of severe stomach ailments. But, as I learn from a medical man, most of the sufferers try to conceal the fact of their indulgence in such unnatural drinks. Consequently, there is often much difficulty in diagnosing their condition, and it happens not seldom that death is the result. When one hears all these things, one can only deplore in the strongest degree the rigorous laws by which such difficulties are placed in the way of obtaining ordinary alcoholic beverages.'



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