

The dreadful and ruinous effects of dram drinking / elucidated in Mr. Poynder's affecting, important and interesting evidence before the Committee of the Honourable House of Commons, appointed to investigate into the state of the police of the metropolis ... ; to which is annexed, a letter from Mr. Upton, giving an account of the direful effects of dram-drinking.

Contributors

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61875/p
H. Cole
*Oh that a Man should put an Enemy in his Mouth,
To steal away his Brains!*

SHAKESPEARE.

THE
DREADFUL AND RUINOUS EFFECTS
OF
DRAM DRINKING,

ELUCIDATED IN
MR. POYNDER'S
AFFECTING, IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING
EVIDENCE

Before the COMMITTEE of the Honourable House of Commons,
APPOINTED TO INVESTIGATE INTO THE STATE OF THE

Police of the Metropolis:

PROVING

That the drinking of Spirituous Liquors is a Stimulus to Murder, Theft, Breach of Trust, and Laziness; many Instances given of the melancholy Proof of the Assertion—Dram-drinking among Females, the Source from whence arises most of the Evils of Prostitution; and to the Effects of Liquor is to be ascribed their first Deviation from the Paths of Virtue.—Numbers of the unhappy Culprits who have suffered Death, trace their Ruin to the early Attachment to Dram-Drinking.—Interesting Account of the difference of the Effects of Beer and Spirits with regard to Intoxication, and the dreadful Mischiefs arising from the Use of Spirituous Liquors to that of Beer.—Instances given where Clerks, Servants, &c. have been led to rob their Masters in order to satisfy their inordinate Partiality to Spirituous Liquors.—*Above One-eighth of all the Deaths that take place in the Metropolis, above Twenty Years old, happen prematurely, through Excess in drinking Spirits!*—The Neglect of Religion is owing to the Habit of Dram Drinking; and to which Evil is chiefly to be ascribed the presenting Melancholy and

ALARMING INCREASE of CRIME!

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

A LETTER from Mr. UPTON,

Giving an Account of the direful Effects of Dram-Drinking; that it causes Diseased Liver, Dropsy, Apoplexy, Paralysis, Madness, and Death!—The ill Consequences of drinking diluted Spirits and Water at Night, to Persons of a sedentary Habit.—Strong Arguments why Beer and Ale should be the general Beverage, to the total Exclusion of all Spirituous Liquors.

“ The intemperate use of spirituous liquors has been found by experience, for many years past, more destructive to the labouring class of people in cities and manufacturing towns, than all the injuries accruing from unhealthy seasons, impure air, infection and close confinement to work within doors, or much fatigue without.” Dr. WILLAN.

London:

Printed and Sold by G. SMEETON, 17, St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross.
[PRICE THREE PENCE.]

* * In order that every Person may be in Possession of this little Tract, it is printed and published at the Expense of a Philanthropist, at the cost

DREADFUL EFFECTS of DRAM-DRINKING,

Exemplified in the Evidence of Mr. POYNTER,

Before the Committee of the Hon. House of Commons, April 21, 1817,

The Hon. H. G. BENNET in the Chair.

Mr. Poynder called in; and examined

You are clerk of Bridewell Hospital?—Yes.

How long have you been so?—For twelve years.

Have you served any other public office in the city of London?—I have served the office of under Sheriff of London and Middlesex for three years.

Have those situations afforded you an opportunity of making observations upon the state of the Police of the metropolis?—They have.

Will you state to the Committee the result of those observations?—I have made observations on the Police in various ways, chiefly from my intercourse with the prisoners in Newgate, with whom I have had many opportunities of conversing, and I have been deeply convinced of the mischievous effects of bad associations; and believe that flash houses and other receptacles for thieves are highly dangerous to society, from their affording opportunities of concerting schemes of depredation, and the means of corrupting youth, upon the largest scale. A great number of public houses in the metropolis and its vicinity are applied to other purposes than their ostensible trade: I do not allude only to those of notoriously bad character, but to multitudes not generally suspected, but well known to those persons of both sexes who are in the habit of frequenting them, and who are not likely to become informers: nor is this all, nor by any means the worst; some other of these houses (I hope not many) are abused to purposes which cannot be named: on this subject I have felt it a duty to make a more detailed communication to the Secretary of State and the Lord Mayor; and I only refer to it, as tending to show the abominations which are connected with the

public toleration and support of the victualling system. If the Committee will permit me, I would here make some observations on an evil which I am decidedly of opinion lies at the root of all other evils in this city, and elsewhere; I mean the evil of drinking, but especially of DRINKING SPIRITS; I have been so long in the habit of hearing criminals refer all their misery to this source, that I now cease to ask them the cause of their ruin.

It appears easy to understand the principal on which this fact is founded:—for

1. As to the *theft*.—All other habits of vice being either created or increased by drinking (and commonly both,) and all vice being *expensive*, if a man has not himself the means of gratifying this and other indulgencies, and is still determined to have them, he must resort to the substance of his neighbour for a supply: hence the violation of property; and numerous criminals have accordingly assured me that drinking was the origin of that vicious course which it afterwards kept, until the offended law at last required its victim.

2. As to the *more violent and atrocious crimes*.—I have as repeatedly heard these referred to the effect of drams, and it appears equally easy to understand how this happens. It seems, indeed, hardly necessary to resort to the experience of a criminal in a matter which lies open to every man's own observation. It is well known that the direct effects of drams is to inflame and excite the passions, and it is frequently found as a practical fact, that he whose mind is abandoned to their influence, "fears not God, neither regards man." The criminal is rendered insensible to the milder feelings of his nature, and regardless of all consequences, when

ther as affecting this world or another; his reason is, for the time, departed from him, and he is rendered ripe for the most sanguinary and ferocious acts: nearly all the convicts for murder with whom I have conversed, have admitted themselves to have been under the influence of spirits at the time of the act; many of those who are tried throughout the country, are proved on their trials to have acted under the same influence; and I am fully persuaded that in all the trials for murder which take place, with very few (if any) exceptions, it would appear on investigation that the criminal had, in the first instance, delivered up his mind to the brutalizing effects of spirituous liquors. I had particular occasion to observe this in the case of Mr. Bonar's murderer, who, when not under the influence of drams, was a civil and obliging man, but when he had been drinking was fierce and violent: he had left his former master (who is well known to me) for this vice; he had been drinking spirits before the murder, drank them frequently on his road from Chislehurst, and was intoxicated when he was apprehended. It was in evidence, with regard to the murderer of the two families at Ratcliffe Highway, that he had been drinking the strongest kind of gin both before and after those murders. Another dreadful case of profligacy, referable to the same source, occurred in the case of Smith, who was tried in my second year of duty, for setting fire to his own house in Newgate-street; there appeared no doubt, on his trial, that his wife was the agent of the crime, or at all events that she was well acquainted with it; but as she died almost immediately after her husband had been suspected, his counsel suggested, in the cross-examination of the witness, that, as she was addicted to liquor, the fire might possibly have been occasioned by her from accident, when in a state of intoxication; this probability was also repeated by the prisoner in a written defence: indeed, the suggestion of such a doubt was his only chance for acquittal, for I

heard the whole trial, and certainly a clearer case was never established against a prisoner: the jury, advert- ing to the plea that there was a possibility of the wife having occasioned it when in liquor, acquitted him. This man lately died, and whilst on his death bed, confessed that he had induced his wife to set fire to his house, and had poisoned her as soon as suspicion had fallen upon him, under an apprehension that she might betray his secret. I have the means of know- ing, from a very respectable lodger in their house, that both these unhappy persons were long addicted to the drinking of spirits, and the prisoner himself was sensibly under the influ- ence of liquor during the whole of his trial. The other striking cases which fell under my own observation, were those of two men, who were tried in one session, and executed together, for the same crime of murdering the females, to whom they professed at- tachment: each of these men admitted to me, before their deaths, that they had been drinkers of spirits, and par- ticularly, that they were under their influence at the time of the act. I could give many other, and much more recent, instances, to prove the consequences of this habit, but it would only be, to give the history of almost all the worst cases of crime which have fallen under my own ob- servation for some years past: many criminals have even assured me, that it was necessary before they committed crimes, of particular atrocity, that they should have recourse to drams, as a stimulus, and that, knowing this to be the fact, they resorted to them beforehand, for no other object, but that they might be enabled to harden their natures and fortify their minds, after which they found it easy to encounter any risk, and to proceed all lengths. I remember one man in particular saying to me, "Sir, I could not enter your house in the dead of the night, and take the chance of your shooting me in it, or of my being hung when I got out of it, unless I was to get well primed first." I could not but feel, that a system which thus

qualifies one part of Society for becoming the plunderers and destroyers of the other, must be radically vicious, and that the existence of such a state of things renders it the interest of every man to deprecate its continuance. I would observe here, that in many trials it has appeared, that the prosecutors themselves had been drinking before the commission of the offence, and thus had tempted others to take advantage of their state, and laid themselves open the more easily to attack; and it sometimes happens that the Jury, in endeavouring to ascertain the guilt or innocence of a prisoner, is first obliged to ascertain the condition of the prosecutor, in order to judge what degree of credit is to be attached to his testimony. This habit is also the fruitful source of breaches of trust, and leads to perpetual violations of confidence. Most of the cases of embezzlement which I have known in my official situation, were referable to drinking; such prisoners have told me, that the first temptation to abuse the confidence reposed in them, arose from the necessity of supplying themselves with liquor, and that, when once the first barrier between honesty and fraud was passed, all afterwards became easy, and they went on without repugnance, till detection ensued. I had myself two clerks, who betrayed their trust, after serving me faithfully for a long time; one of them acquired the habit of drinking, and then corrupted the other; they then wanted more money than their salaries would supply, and agreed with each other to resort to frauds of all kinds. I was repeatedly afterwards applied to by the wife of one of them, who was an honest and industrious milliner, and who gave me the most distressing account of her husband's conduct: he received money which was due to her, for her own exertions in her business, but spent his own gains, on his vices, and he suffered executions to be levied on furniture and goods, which not his money, but her's had purchased. The other clerk, who was younger and unmarried, and perfectly competent to

his situation, brought disgrace on very respectable friends in humble life, (who had always till then maintained their credit) by forfeiting his own character and losing the means of subsistence. I had another clerk, who, after a long continued habit of drinking spirits, took laudanum while in my service, but Dr. Clutterbuck, whom I sent to him, was able to save his life: he then confessed, that he was only induced to take such a step, because he could not bear to see the misery which his own habits had brought upon himself, his wife, and his children: he was not however reclaimed by this circumstance, but went on in the same course; and I afterwards found his wife, by mere accident (under a public advertisement for relief,) in a miserable lodging in the neighbourhood of Brunswick-square, without a bed to lie on, and with five young children to support. He had then deserted his family, leaving a letter behind him, in which he deplored in the strongest terms, his own guilt and folly, and stated it was his intention to destroy himself. If these are strong cases of their class, I am persuaded that most men in my own profession can at least confirm this fact—that drinking is the bane of multitudes in it, who would otherwise be valuable in their particular department, and useful members of society. The law-writers especially, are almost universally addicted to drinking, as every law stationer can testify, and a person who makes it his business to provide situations for law-clerks, and who has had great experience among all classes of them, assured me, that cases of violated trust, arising from their habit of drinking, were constantly occurring, and that it was impossible to enumerate the instances of forfeited character and of individual suffering, which this source of expense and crime had brought under his own observation. In other professions and trades many examples of violated trust from this cause, must be familiar to every one; mercantile clerks, apprentices, and shopmen, in order to supply their

desire for this pernicious ingredient, have in repeated instances become criminals for life. Servants, both male and female, have first robbed their masters and mistresses, in order that they might procure liquor; their character then gone, they have fallen in consequence from bad to worse. The woman who was last executed in London, for robbing her master's house, in conjunction with her own paramour, acknowledged herself, to me, to have been a drinker of spirits; this leads me to observe, that with regard to the extensive drinking among females, there is little doubt that to this source must be ascribed most of the evils of prostitution. To the effects of liquor, multitudes of that sex must refer both their first deviation from virtue, and their subsequent continuance in vice; most of the unhappy women who lead a life of continued profligacy, live, more or less, under the constant influence of spirituous liquor; perhaps it would be impossible for them without that aid to continue such a life, or to endure the scenes which they are called to witness.

I would further observe, with regard to the influence of drinking upon *crime in general*, that from my own experience at the Old Bailey, I have no doubt it is capable of abundant proof, that a very considerable (and perhaps by far the larger) proportion of offences which have brought criminals to that bar may be referred to this source. In many cases, where a prisoner was not under the influence of liquor at the moment of committing the crime, such as forgery for instance, I have been able to trace such previous habits of drinking, as left no doubt on my mind that this was the master-vice, which, while it was expensive in itself, involed him also in various other expences, which were unitedly beyond his means of supporting, and induced him to have recourse to the crime of forgery for their supply.

I would further notice the striking *difference between spirits and beer*, in the mode of their operation: beer

makes persons first heavy, then stupid, and then senseless; the beer drinker becomes more drunken than the drinker of spirits, and shows his condition more, but he is in that very proportion, more harmless to society; his very helplessness and inactivity give a sort of pledge for the security of others. In the case of dram drinking, however, the effects are not besotting or stupifying; spirits are less narcotic, but more exciting, than beer; so far from incapacitating for action, they stimulate to it; they increase and irritate the passions; they heat the brain, by inflaming the quality and quickening the circulation of the blood; but they are so far from disqualifying the man from executing the designs which he may meditate under such a morbid excitement, that they quicken him to every kind of exertion which is necessary to his purpose; a man can, in the course of the day, drink, and multitudes do drink, twenty or more glasses of spirits, without being visibly affected by them, while the drinker of porter or ale would be seen reeling about the street: the effects produced in these cases being so different, there is less disgust excited in spectators for the drinker of spirits, and consequently he is less likely to be shamed out of the habit; the very little time too which is requisite for drinking drams, and the facilities for obtaining them which every where abound, are still further favourable to that system: I apprehend, therefore, that a broad distinction is to be taken between drinking and drunkenness, or between the use of spirits and of beer. Beer, in order to produce palpable intoxication, must be drank in large quantities, while enough of spirits can be obtained for producing the greatest moral mischief, without the effects upon the drinker being so apparent. I am the more desirous of adverting to this distinction, because it has been said there is less drunkenness than there was. This may be readily admitted; but the concession does not prove that there is less drinking, or less crime. There is perhaps less of gross drunkenness brought before the

public eye than when beer was the national liquor; but there is probably, on that very account, so much more drinking, and so much more crime.

I have been further led, in my official situation, to consider the heavy expenses of the criminal judicature of the country; and referring, as I have been induced to do, so large a portion of public crime to the habit of drinking, it has appeared to me that if any considerable change could be induced in the national habits in that particular, a very large saving would accrue in this department of the state, and probably such a saving as would be found even more than adequate to the revenue derived from distillation. This will appear unlikely at first sight: but when the Committee revert to the expenses of the Police establishment and the other charges of the criminal department, to the expenses of public prosecutions, to the sums paid as rewards for convictions, to the expenses of removing convicts within this country—of trying them throughout the country—of supporting them in the prisons and in the hulks—and above all, of transporting them abroad,—and especially when the very remarkable increase is considered which has taken place of late years in the business and length both of sessions and assizes (a fact by no means adequately accounted for by the increase of population,) the above proposition may not appear so improbable; at least it seems well worthy of the consideration of all who are capable of investigating the subject, whether the peculiar facilities for drinking which are provided throughout the country, do not, by furnishing to the poor and uninstructed, temptations to crime which are too strong to resist, occasion at the same time a charge to the country, in repressing and punishing that crime, which is more than equal, even in a pecuniary view, to any advantage which can ever be derived from such a polluted source. I would observe on two or three of the last-mentioned points, so far only as they fall within my knowledge: in the last year in which I was in office, the disbursements of the sheriffs for the

necessary administration of justice only in London and Middlesex, exceeded £12,000. In this sum is included one little short of £4000. paid for rewards on the conviction of offenders in the city and county of Middlesex alone. As to the length of the Old Bailey sessions, it is within the memory of most persons who are now engaged in its business, that if a session continued from the Wednesday in one week to the Monday in the next, (or five days,) it was an extraordinary circumstance; whereas it has now become a common occurrence for the session to last a fortnight and three weeks. This happens, no doubt, in a measure, from the increase of population; from robbery being conducted more upon system, since it is no longer an adventitious pursuit, but a regular profession; and from many criminals being able to pay (out of funds obtained from plunder) large fees to counsel for the most able and ingenious defences which can be furnished; but I am persuaded that the actual increase of crime will alone explain the increased length of sessions and assizes; and that the great cause of the increase of crime itself is to be traced to drinking. The average amount of duties paid at the excise-office, for the last five years, upon foreign spirits, upon British spirits made in England, and upon Irish and Scotch imported, is only about five millions per annum; new, although, in consequence of the very great extent of smuggling, this can by no means be taken as any accurate criterion of the actual consumption, it yet shews the proportion in which the revenue has been benefited, as a question of taxation; but it must be remembered, that from this receipt of five millions, there must be deducted the whole charge of the excise department, the cost of watching, and punishing smuggling and illicit distillation, and other necessary outgoings. After these deductions are made, the net receipt on spirits, which actually arrives in the Exchequer, will perhaps appear of far less magnitude than many have supposed, and consequently so far weaken the argument for the use of spirituous liquor which is

founded upon the advantage arising to the revenue. Against this amount of five millions so reduced, let the savings in the criminal judicature of the country which have been above alluded to, be put, and I will venture to predict that such a result will appear as will show that, even as a mere question of revenue, there will hardly be a pretext for a continuance of the present system, even if it should not appear that there will be an actual gain by its abandonment.

I would next observe, that I am disposed to refer *the remarkable corruption of the Metropolitan Prison* (in addition to the permission of visiting) to the facility of procuring spirits: while they are to be had, it is in vain to disguise that they will be procured even in a prison, and *that* in spite of the strongest laws to the contrary. I believe that the late keeper of Newgate himself used exertions to prevent their introduction, but he could not examine every visitor. This duty was left to the turnkeys, who, whether from inadvertance or design, notoriously permitted the relations and friends of the prisoners to introduce liquor. The examination which takes place of those who are admitted into the prison, with the professed object of discovering whether bottles are concealed about their persons is a mere formal mockery; and I have observed with pain, on some occasions, that after the warrant for execution has arrived, and even down to the fatal morning, prisoners have been more or less under the influence of spirits, which have been introduced by those mistaken friends who have thought that they were rendering a service by it to the unfortunate criminal.

I cannot avoid also referring a very large proportion (perhaps almost the whole) of *youthful depravity* to this source. I by no means wish to convey the idea that all those children who commit crimes are themselves drinkers to any excess (although it will be found that almost all of them do drink from their early years); but I wish rather to state that the habits and customs of their relatives and friends with regard to drinking are such that the

children cannot but be depraved for want of some counteracting principle to keep them honest and virtuous. The children of such families cannot properly be said to have any home; they are virtually deserted by their natural protectors and guardians, and consequently lose the advantage of moral instruction, a good example, and of salutary correction. Fathers and mothers who have themselves lost the habits of domestic life, can neither value nor preserve those habits in their children; who, while their parents are pursuing their vices, are, of course, left to follow theirs; hence they are found gambling in the street, and associating with vicious companions, by whom they are taught to thieve, as well as to contract various other habits of depravity. So far from theft being discouraged by their parents, it is too frequently a principal source of their support, and in many instances, the unnatural father is himself found the instructor of his child in crime, as well as the participator in his plunder. The fate of female children in such families is still more deplorable, and it is only too well ascertained that the ruin of multitudes of females for life takes place at so early an age as is perfectly shocking to humanity. In most of such cases, I have found the parents the destroyers of their own children; indeed it is almost impossible that, without their connivance or consent, their children could become abandoned and depraved at so early an age. It is perfectly true that the education of the lower orders are doing much; but there are thousands of parents who require to be convinced that it is either their duty or interest to permit their children to be taught at all, since they derive a greater profit from their ignorance than they can ever hope to do from their instruction; and there is little hope of convincing such persons, so long as they are rendered insensible to their children's interests by their own addiction to drinking.

I would further observe, that the continuance of the present system of drinking has appeared to me calculated to encourage and perpetuate habits of

insubordination and sedition; and I feel strongly persuaded that the government loses infinitely more in the alienation of the minds of its people than it can ever gain by the largest contribution to its revenue. Cashman, the rioter, who was lately executed in London, assured me, the day before his death, that he had been drinking spirits repeatedly before he joined the mob. It was in evidence that some of the rioters who were tried and acquitted, as well as others who were examined, but not put on their trials, had been drinking spirits at Spa-fields, and on the road to the city; and from one circumstance which came to my knowledge, I have no doubt that spirits were given gratuitously to many of the mob. It was further in evidence, that young Watson was under the influence of liquor when he entered Mr. Beckwith's shop. The murderers of Mr. Horsfall, at Huddersfield, had all been drinking spirits before they went out, and afterwards on the road, while waiting for Mr. Horsfall. The frame breakers in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire are found to have almost invariably drunk spirits before the different attacks. Those who attacked Mr. Cartwright's mill, when so resolute and successful a defence was made by its proprietor and his men, were all under the influence of liquor, and were even supplied with it during the progress of the attack by their comrades.—The effect of liquor upon the Irish, in every scene of depredation and murder, needs only to be adverted to: it is certain that the abuse of this destructive stimulus in that country fomented and keeps alive the most atrocious and appalling crimes; nor will any state of ignorant or savage life be sufficient to account for what passes daily in the sister kingdom, without reference to the peculiar excitement of spirituous liquors, which (whatever may be the remote cause) are the proximate cause of almost all the crime and cruelty which abound there. As far as my own experience goes as to the disaffection and discontent prevailing here, I am convinced that the most fertile source of contempt

for human law as well as divine is to be found in the drinking of spirits: the mind is soured and irritated in consequence of perpetual excitement; it is ill at ease with itself, and vents its resentment upon all around.—Among the causes of offence which such a man finds, it is natural he should manifest most impatience at what restrains him most; and as government, and law, and order, are (for the general good) imposing perpetual obstacles in his way, he will hate and villify them, and seek to render authority contemptible by all the means in his power. The morning dram shop and the evening public house are well calculated to form and cultivate such a state of mind; factious newspapers, as well as other pernicious publications, help to mislead and seduce those who wish to be deceived, and such as cannot read, hear others read; seditious companions keep each other in countenance, and treason assumes a confidence and courage which it would never otherwise acquire; hence the most unlawful combinations, and the most horrid oaths; hence facilities are afforded to such persons for collecting together from night to night which their own houses would not supply. In these cases, it is not to be denied that the liquor which is furnished forms one great source of attraction, leads to false and perverted reasonings, to late hours and to increased expense, in instances where expence can be so ill afforded: not even the pause of one day in the week is allowed, but the Sunday newspaper presents an inducement when the business of the week is over, and assists in keeping up the same round of political and moral mischief. It cannot be expected with such incentives to evil, the slave of his appetite will either fear God or honour the king. We find accordingly, that in throwing off the divine government, human allegiance has been sensibly affected in the lower ranks of society, and that the best security and cheapest defence of nations is a moral population; whence it becomes both the duty and interest of rulers to see that least they do not administer to passions which are so injurious in their operation.

Upon the whole, I beg leave to state it as my firm conviction, founded upon some experience, that so far as regards offences against the laws of the state, the continuance of the present system is eminently favourable to public crime; that inducements of so strong a nature are afforded by authority for its commission, as the lower (and in some degree even the middle) class of society, find it impossible to resist; and that no influence, arising from the counteraction of even the wisest and best system of human judicature, can possibly be found adequate to the protection of public morals, or perhaps eventually to the preservation of society itself, if some radical alteration do not take place.

As far as Newgate is concerned, did you represent the state of that prison to your superiors?—Yes; I saw Mr. Holford on the subject, and gave the following statement in writing, in the beginning of the last year, to the sheriffs, whom I served:—"The following statement is respectfully submitted to the sheriffs, in order to their report in the court of aldermen.—The indiscriminate visiting of the prison of Newgate by all persons, whether male or female, who claim any relationship to the prisoners, is altogether opposed to the moral improvement of those who are confined, and to the due regulation of the interior. The following reasons may serve to show that this opinion is well founded:—1st. One object of confinement is the *withdrawing the criminal for a time from the companions of his former life, and from the evil courses to which he had been addicted*, in order that by such retirement, leisure and opportunity may be afforded, for an alteration of conduct: upon the present system he associates with the same companions, talks the same language and enjoys the same vices to which he has been accustomed in the world: so far therefore as the criminal is concerned, he remains the same character still, nor is the general aggregate of crime lessened by his confinement, since it can be proved, that from the facility of intercourse which subsists between the interior

and exterior of Newgate, some of the worst and most extensive burglaries and robberies have been plotted in that prison; forged notes have been fabricated and passed there, and coining itself has been carried on within its walls.—2nd. *The introduction of spirituous liquors, and their ordinary use throughout the prison*, so inevitable upon the present system: the fact is notorious, that in spite of public acts of parliament and the regulations of the court of aldermen, spirituous liquors may be procured by all the prisoners, not excepting those under the sentence of death, who are frequently under the sensible influence of liquor (though not in a state of intoxication) from the time of the report coming down, to the period of their execution. A search of visitors (particularly of females) is indeed professed to be made by the turnkeys, but whoever had an opportunity of observing the manner in which this is done, must be sensible that it is little else than a matter of form; a trifling bribe also will purchase the right of passing without too strict an inquiry; and although convictions have occasionally taken place of persons for carrying liquor into the prison, such cases are usually only those in which a proper understanding has not subsisted between the turnkeys and the offenders, and the practice does undoubtedly prevail to a very large extent, nor will it be possible to prevent it so long as the unrestrained influx of visitors is permitted.—3d. The principal evil perhaps which is consequent upon the present system of visiting, is *the constant introduction into the prison of the most profligate and abandoned females who are to be found in the metropolis*. A woman has only to state herself to be the wife of a prisoner, and although she may be well known as a common street walker by every turnkey she must pass, she is admitted without further inquiry. In this way every man in Newgate is visited by any woman who chuses to inquire for him; and the mere mention of a name is, in the same way, permitted to pass, all those women who chuse to apply for admission for the

purposes of general prostitution. It is hardly necessary to enter into any detail of the consequences of such a system, nor to advert to the gross scenes which must have been observed in open day light by every one who has been much in the habit of frequenting the prison. But this is not all, nor perhaps the worst; it is certain that females are not excluded at the time of locking up the prison for the night; but every woman who chuses to remain through the night may do so, upon the small fee of one shilling being paid for the permission. This perquisite of the turnkeys is technically called the '*bad money*,' and is divided between them. It is easier to conceive than to describe the horrid profligacy and indecency attending such a system as this, in wards each containing several beds, most of which are not even separated from each other by a single curtain; nor is there perhaps any circumstance which calls more loudly for correction and reform than this, nor one which more clearly marks the evil of indiscriminate visiting; since whatever rules may be made which are intended to be obligatory either on the keeper or the turnkeys, the practice of visiting on the part of females in general can never be subjected to regulation so long as it is permitted to exist at all. If an alteration were once to take place in this particular, and to be acted upon with firmness, incalculable improvement in the condition of the prison and the character of the prisoners could not fail to be the result. At present the depravity of the metropolitan prison is proverbial. The cases of venereal disease, always to be found in the infirmary, are, for the greater part (if not altogether) contracted *in the prison*; and in short, a more deplorable state of society cannot be imagined than that which is consequent upon the unlicensed intercourse which subsists between the prison and the public.

“Proposed resolutions:—That no females be, under any pretence whatever, permitted to enter the prison, except to visit such prisoners (after the report shall have come down) as

may be ordered for execution. 2. That no males be permitted, under any pretence whatever, to enter the prison except such solicitors as it may be necessary for prisoners to see before their trial, in order to their defence; and also except those persons who (after the report shall have come down) may visit such prisoners as are ordered for execution.”

During the course of several years' experience in visiting the poor, I have been led to refer by far the largest portion of their poverty and misery to the operation of spirituous liquors. In endeavouring to illustrate my views of this subject, I would class my observations under the following heads;

1. The obduracy and hardness of heart which the habit induces.
2. The distaste for labour, and the waste of time which it produces.
3. The infatuating character of the habit, and the difficulty of abandoning it.
4. The neglect of and contempt for religion, and the religious institutions of the country, which are produced by it.
5. The injury to health and life which are consequent upon it.

1. With respect to its *tendency to harden the heart, and extinguish the natural affections*: I have observed that it engenders selfishness and unkindness in the poor to an extraordinary degree. Many men are rendered by it brutal towards their wives, while many others desert them altogether; and instances might easily be given of patient suffering and premature death in great numbers of women, from no other cause than that their natural protectors have lost all proper feeling, and treated them with continual neglect and inhumanity. Men also defraud their wives and children of the money that should be spent in their necessary subsistence, which is applied to procure an artificial want; and such is the inseparable connection between drinking and other vices, that it is well if this be the least to which such husbands are addicted. If the female of a family has acquired this vicious taste, she will become insensible to the claims even of her own children, the strongest that

can affect a mother ; and I have known instances where loaves of bread, which had been given for the supply of starving infants, have been exchanged for gin, as well as beds sold, and clothes pawned, to procure it. Where both parties are abandoned to this habit, the evil is of course doubled : themselves and their children are clothed in rags, and brought up amidst so much dirt, as renders it evident to a visitor, even at first sight, that a total disregard of comfort and cleanliness reigns throughout the household ; under which he will almost despair of being able to afford any effectual relief. Under this head must be classed the utter ignorance and insensibility of mind, which are found to prevail in such persons, in respect to all religious and moral obligations. They do not know the elements and first principles of duty to God or their neighbour, any more than if they were professed heathens ; and I may also mention the humiliation of mind consequent upon steadily receiving parochial relief, which, although it may just help to preserve the degraded existence, extinguishes all those feelings of honest independence which it is of so much importance to cherish in the poor.

In the next place, *as to the hatred of Labour, and the abuse of Time*—It is now very generally admitted, that labourers, manufacturers and workmen, throughout the country, are deeply injured by the vice of drinking. It is no uncommon thing for men to pass the first two or three days of the week in the public-house, where they spend either the whole, or the greatest part, of the last week's earnings ; increase their own profligacy, and multiply the miseries of all who are dependent upon them. I am fully persuaded that much poverty is absolutely created by drinking, and that all poverty is greatly aggravated by it. It is in the public-houses that extensive combinations are formed against masters, that common funds are collected for the support of those workmen who hold out longest against their employers, and that able plans are organized for the application of those funds. The political evils of such associations have been noticed

already. The moral can only be adverted to, for it is impossible they should be described. They are felt, however, by individuals, in the demoralizing influence of idleness and evil company : by superiors, in resistance to lawful authority ; and by families, in the irreparable injury entailed upon them, by poisoning all the springs of domestic peace and social virtue.

In the 3d. place, *as to the infatuating nature of the habit*.—I have observed that when it has once taken possession of the mind and body, it is next to a miracle if it yields to any sense of shame, or to any fear of loss. The power with which it retains its hold, is really wonderful : a man shall see his property wasting, his health declining, his character departing from him, and all in vain ; he shall even form the most solemn resolutions of amendment to no purpose, and admit the force and truth of every remonstrance made by his relatives and friends, without being able to abandon the habit ; he knows that poison is in his cup, and yet he will drink on. I have known repeated instances of this fact, and so I believe has almost every one else. It is no uncommon case for drinkers, when admonished by those whom they esteem, to weep over their own folly ; such instances I have myself seen again and again ; but how few are the instances where resolutions of amendment do not vanish with such tears ! It is perhaps the most fatal circumstance connected with this habit, that it enervates and debases the mind so as to deprive it of its natural vigour, and prevent the success of every effort for its own deliverance. I knew a case in which the preservation of an office of much importance to the possessor, depended upon the abandonment of the habit of spirit drinking ; this person, who was much respected by a great number of his superiors, was treated by them with all possible lenity for some years, and every effort was made in the interim to reclaim him from his folly ; he always received these attempts with the greatest gratitude, but could not give up his vice, and it was found

impossible at last to continue him in his place: his health followed the loss of substance, and his life, of both. This is no solitary case.

With respect to the fourth point, viz. *the neglect of Religion and its duties*.—It appears unreasonable to make ample provision for the national religion and its institutions, and at the same time to make abundant provision for the cultivation and extension of every description of vice. The great object of the religious instruction which is judiciously provided by the state, is presumed to be the moral improvement of its people, and the preservation of public peace, and good order; the whole system of human law appears to come in aid of this important object. Drinking, however, induces contempt of the law of God, especially the appointment of the Sabbath—hatred to the law of man, as imposing perpetual restraint upon crime—and neglect to the public institutions of religion, as hostile to a system of sensual indulgence, against which those institutions bear constant testimony; drinking furnishes certain temptations to the breach of the whole divine decalogue, and to the violation of all human laws. It is connected with, and subsists by, a system which is as opposite to the requisitions of Christianity, as error is opposed to truth, or light to darkness. For the same authority, therefore, to countenance the two systems, appears a great contradiction, and is only to pull down with one hand what is built up with the other: the things are incompatible in themselves, and the difference between them is founded upon the eternal distinction, which subsists between right and wrong, and between good and evil. It need then, be no matter of surprise if the counteraction to crime afforded by the public establishment of religion, and its ministers, should be found inadequate to its object, when it is considered that persons are only pursuing the natural course to which their passions incline them, when they yield to the temptation of drinking, which is thrown in their way through the whole

week; while the religious instruction of one day out of the seven, if not entirely slighted and neglected by such persons (as is almost universally the case) can hardly be expected to influence their reason and their judgment to such an extent, as to silence the more frequent and seductive claims preferred by their passions. The result of my own experience among the poor, is completely in unison with this reasoning: their own ignorance of God, and themselves, as a general question, is extreme.

As to the *injury to health and life*.—I have observed, that the children of dram-drinkers are generally of diminutive size, of unhealthy appearance and sickly constitutions, and that in adults this vice is peculiarly destructive in its operation; it deranges the animal economy, weakens the nerves, destroys the digestive powers, obstructs the secretions, and destroys the life; the stomach is kept by it in a state of constant excitement, and by the frequent application of an artificial stimulus, at length loses its tone, and refuses to perform its office; the appetite becomes vitiated, and fails; the more important organs of the body, particularly the liver and the lungs, are disturbed in their functions, and frequently become the subjects of incurable disease; depression of spirits almost invariably accompanies drinking, while the effect produced by every fresh stimulus is only to excite to temporary action, which, when it has ceased, leaves the same languor and depression, to be again removed by the same destructive means; almost all attacks of fever or inflammatory disease are found fatal in the case of dram-drinkers, because the blood of such persons is remarkably destitute of oxygen, and therefore can afford little or no antiseptic resistance to such diseases; in some cases dropsy and consumption, in others paralysis and apoplexy, are evident consequences; while premature old age is observed in most instances, and a miserable existence in all. Dr. Willan observes, “The intemperate use of spirituous liquors has been found by

experience, for many years past, more destructive to the labouring class of people in cities and manufacturing towns, than all the injuries accruing from unhealthy seasons, impure air, infection, and close confinement to work within doors, or much fatigue without. It is likewise ascertained, that the same bad habit not only produces tedious and peculiar maladies, but is often the means of rendering inveterate, or even fatal, many diseases of the throat and lungs; also fevers, and inflammations of the bowels, liver, kidneys, &c. which would have otherwise readily yielded to proper medical treatment. On comparing my own observations with the bills of mortality, I am convinced that considerable more than one eight of all the deaths which takes place in the metropolis, in persons above twenty years old, happen prematurely, through excess in drinking spirits. These pernicious liquors are generally supposed to have an immediate and specific effect upon the liver, which has been found, after death, in drinkers of spirits, hardened, and altered in its texture, size, and colour. It appears, however, that the stomach and bowels suffer first from the use of spirits, and that their baneful influence is afterwards extended gradually to every part of the body, producing the following symptoms; which he then proceeds to enumerate, and which are of the worst description.

The cases of disease with which the hospitals are filled, tend to confirm in a strong manner, the evils of dram-drinking. There is little doubt, that a large, if not the greatest, proportion of maladies which furnish the hospitals with patients, must be referred to this source. My own knowledge on this branch of the subject, can of course be only limited, and is not professional; but, partly from official connexion with the City hospitals, and partly from rather an extensive acquaintance with the habits and afflictions of the poor, I have seen enough to convince me, that drinking of spirits is a considerable source of disease and death, in the lower classes of

society. It is not a moral pestilence alone, but a physical scourge; and innumerable indeed have been the victims who have fallen beneath its power: many local diseases (even in surgery) are referable to the habitual use of spirits, and their destructive influence is constantly manifested in cases of sore legs; a complaint which afflicts a very great proportion of the inferior orders of this town; the worst specimens of this disease are to be traced to the inordinate use of spirituous liquors, and they are commonly cases which never completely get well: and the subjects of them drag out their existence in going from one hospital to another, while they are rendered incapable of laborious exertions when thrown upon the country.

A medical man, who has been in extensive practice in and about the metropolis for about thirty years, recently made me the following report of the result of his experience.

*Copy of Report from James Upton,
of Throgmorton Street, Esq. April
14, 1817.*

“ Your request has been upon my mind ever since you made it to me, on account of the magnitude and enormity of the evil alluded to; I am really at a loss where to begin and where to end; the vital interests, both of nations and individuals, are involved in it; no less so the domestic and public peace and general safety. Idleness is the remote, and passions unrestrained, either by education or religious principle, are the acting and immediate causes of dram-drinking. The evil is far more extensive than can be conceived by common minds or superficial observers: its operation, I had almost said, is felt more or less in every family; and germs of it, to appear afterwards in disastrous and disappointing seasons like these, have been sown unperceived in the lower classes of society. My attention was first led to this subject, when a student at Edinburgh in 1784. The quantity of whisky and new malt spirit, drank by the lower orders in Scotland at that time exceeded the gin-drinking of this country, in the same or even lower classes of society; its destructive consequences were more marked on that account, aided, possibly, by their not being able to procure animal food, living chiefly upon fish and oatmeal. From this cause I witnessed the fatal consequences in the Infirmary there, by an enlargement of the liver to an extent almost unexampled in

this country; its figure could be distinctly traced on the parietes of the abdomen with a pencil; the other contents of the belly being pressed down into the pelvis by its magnitude; always proving fatal, and the instances very numerous indeed. The diseases induced by this fatal habit vray much, according to the proportion of ardent spirits taken, in the quality also as well as the constitution of the parties drinking it. Many very excellent men have become the subjects of incurable stomach complaints, and wasted away in middle life, where there has been counting-house application, with only one or two glasses at most of diluted spirit and water, taken every night at the coffee-house or at home, who would have been shocked to be considered otherwise than as sober men, thinking they were rather benefiting than injuring their health. Travellers again, go much farther, they generally die of brandied stomachs; and there is not the least power of taking or keeping nourishment. The next degree is diseased liver, with deranged stomach and brain, dropsy, arterial ossifications, mental derangement, paralysis, serous apoplexy, and death. In this incurable state of things, all social, parental, filial, and religious feeling, if the latter ever existed, are completely destroyed, and every possible immorality is let loose to occupy their place. Such is the dreadful vacuum and craving sensation of stomach which dram-drinking produces, that I have no doubt, in order to quiet it, a man will and has sacrificed every thing dear to man. This is not all; this mode of life excites artificial venereal appetite; and you have an offspring possessing only half animal life. A vast number of women have been taught to drink, in the middle and in the higher classes, by taking indiscriminately quack medicines, containing alcohol, hot seeds, and essential oils; such as Rymer's Tincture for the Gout in the Stomach, Solomon's Balm of Gilead, etc. I have professionally known those articles taken to a degree of intoxication, and inducing habits of dram-drinking. I have been informed, from very good authority, that Dr. Solomon has laid the foundation of this destructive habit in some thousands of people in Liverpool and its environs. I have known many respectable characters who have I believe from ignorance, fallen into this snare, where close application to any pursuit which has a tendency to produce sinking in the stomach, has led imperceptibly to an indulgence in this bewitching liquor. Medical men generally avoid this evil, as a body, perhaps more than most others, from their knowledge of its pernicious consequences; and I have no doubt are daily checking its growth, whenever opportunity offers. In this respect I have the satisfaction of knowing, that many families have left off the use of spirits altogether. It is not in my department to propose a remedy for this growing evil, an evil which leads

to the sabbath breaking, thieving, murder, and cruelties of every description; and which of late have been so awfully conspicuous in our once comparatively innocent and happy country. I have often wished that greater facilities had been giving to the poor, either for making, or buying at a reasonable rate, their own English beverage—mild and good ale; and that fewer facilities had been given for procuring the three which are termed genuine spirits, brandy, rum, and gin; and that no other compound, of any other name, should be manufactured, which imitations and substitutes are equally injurious to the constitution. But, of late, it has appeared, that the whole strength of a state is not in its inhabitants, but in a revenue drawn from their actual destruction of body and soul. I might add, there is one hope that has lately cheered my mind, from which I anticipate much good, viz. the present National Schools. If the rising generation of the lower orders of society are not essentially benefited by the present mode of education combined with religious instruction, I shall despair of any stop being put to the dreadful catalogue of crimes, which, for the last few years especially, have deluged this country. I confess, I augur much from this source, as long as it is conducted upon the present rational principles. The Bible Society also will, I trust, have its share, but not so extensively where instruction and explanation are necessary. If you can cull any thing useful out of these hasty outlines, I shall be glad; but they have been written in the night, after a hard day's fatigue. Such as they are, they are much at your service: and if the Legislature are enabled in their wisdom, to adopt any plans to obviate this national curse, it will afford great comfort to every humane, reflecting, and Christian mind."

I would conclude by stating, that I have had frequent opportunities, as clerk of Bethlem hospital, of observing, that *madness* is a frequent consequence of the excessive use of spirits. During the twelve years in which I have been there, the cases have been numerous, in which drinking has been expressly assigned by relatives or friends as the cause of insanity; and in some others, where delicacy for the character of the patient or themselves has prevented them from publicly stating the real cause, it has been satisfactorily ascertained, from other sources of information, that the disease proceeded from drinking. In those cases where any hereditary tendency or pre-disposition to this malady exist,

it is easy to conceive how the powerful stimulus of fermented liquor will be both likely to call it into action, and to aggravate its symptoms. In many cases, however, madness is referable to drinking, as an original cause, independently of any constitutional bias. When the connection between the mind and the body is considered, it will form no matter of surprise, that mental disease should frequently supervene upon corporeal derangement; especially when that derangement is of a nature in which the whole mass of blood participates, and where the prime organs and chief secretions of the body are subjected to an unnatural and morbid action. Whatever, also, has a tendency to excite the passions strongly and violently, is not only unfavourable to the exercise of reason, but is often found to suspend its operation, and sometimes to assist in its extinction. It is well known that some persons, when under the influence of liquor, are in a state of temporary madness, although it has never been found necessary to place them under permanent restraint; nor would it be difficult to point to many cases out of Bethlem, where a habitual course of drinking, although it has not rendered a man entirely unequal to the government of himself or his affairs, has yet involved him in a course of action, and led to the exhibition of symptoms, which it would be difficult to call by any other name than that of insanity. Such cases I have seen in my visits to the poor. In the case of former injuries on the head in particular, spirit-drinking appears to have a remarkably maddening effect: and the case of *Hadfield* is an example, who, before he came to the hospital, was often rendered furious and sanguinary by the operation of liquor.

You have stated with great force, (and illustrated what you have said with many curious facts and observations,) your opinion as to the great evil attending upon the drinking so much spirits; can you suggest to the Committee any remedy to that practice, in the present state of society in this country?—I confess it is one of

the most difficult questions which was ever put to me; but I have certainly, whether erroneously or correctly, brought my mind, after some considerable attention to the subject, to the conviction, that so long as spirituous liquors are to be had by the general population of the country, so long evils, such as I have stated, must continue.

The Committee then are to understand, that your remedy would be the putting a stop to distillation of spirituous liquors, and the importation of them?—To the use of them generally.

Are you not aware that the consequence of this legal prevention would be, illicit distillation to an enormous extent; that the experience of the country has shown, in the time of George the Second, that this would be the consequence of any interference, or any attempt to regulate the way in which spirituous liquors should be sold; and that the effect of those regulations would be a great diminution of the revenue, and probably no saving at all in the consumption of spirits, or any improvement to the general moral character of the people? Undoubtedly this is the great difficulty of the subject; but when I put against the difficulty of preventing the general use of ardent spirits, the important, moral, and I think political consequences which would result from that prohibition, I cannot, for one, even if I stand alone in such an opinion, but feel strongly anxious that the experiment should be tried. I humbly apprehend, that the experiment of imposing so high a duty on all spirits as should virtually amount to a prohibition; and at the same time of punishing the sale, by strongly penal laws, has never yet been made; this is the remedy which I would propose, at the same time taking off the duties on the ingredients used in making beer. I feel persuaded that in the period of George II. (alluded to in the question) the duties on spirits were not sufficiently raised, nor were the penal laws properly adapted, or facility offered to the people to return to the comparatively harmless beverage of beer.

SECOND EDITION.

ADDRESS to the METHODISTS.

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TRIAL and CONVICTION

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DAVID ASHCROFT his Brother,
JAMES ASHCROFT the Younger, and
WILLIAM HOLDEN,

FOR THE HORRIBLE

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OF

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James Ashcroft the Elder's Speech on Sentence being pronounced.

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