

Paralysis For Sale.

PARALYSIS has long been deemed one of the direst misfortunes that could afflict humanity,—a death in life,—the heart still beating, the form perhaps unwasted, but the hand powerless, the foot bound more fast than by fetters of iron, the tongue refusing to speak the words of affection, counsel, or command. To escape this the man of wealth will spend money like water, and the physician will send him to wander afar over land and sea to flee the withering touch of Palsy's grisly hand.

Yet this dread plague is now on sale, and daily purchased at fabulous prices by thousands of the American people. Whoever has seen a drunken man or a drunkard has seen a case of paralysis.

There is paralysis of muscle. It manifests itself early in the lips and tongue, so that, like the Ephraimites who could not say "shibboleth" at the fords of Jordan, the victim cannot say "centenary celebration," and soon the baby words "good night" become too much for the stammering lips. The eyes grow heavy, the head droops, the hands lose their grip, the feet stumble, and soon, in one chaotic mass, what was a man rolls under the table or into the gutter.

There is paralysis of vital energy. Never was there anything more deceptive than the idea that alcohol is a sustaining power. It is from first to last a paralyzer. Its very stimulus is due to paralysis. Why does the blood fly to the face and surface of the body till all tingles with the glow? Why is the brain stirred to momentary vigor and unwonted brilliancy? For the same reason that a railroad train dashes down the grade when the brakes refuse to work. Every artery is provided with an elastic coat which acts as a brake, restraining the flow of blood. Alcohol paralyzes the delicate fibers, the restraining agency lets go, and the blood rushes in full tide on its way. It is as if the throttle of a locomotive should be set wide open and the engineer be powerless to close it. But what is the result of throwing all the blood in the body swiftly to the surface and back again? The same as the result of pouring hot tea from the cup into the saucer. The tea or the blood is cooled, and the infallible test of the chemical thermometer shows that the temperature of the whole body will fall within a short time after the taking of alcohol. Hence it is that the drunken man so readily freezes to death.

Pure health for every human organism depends on the constant and prompt removal of the waste matter of the system, every vein and cell sending to the surface through some one of myriad outlets the material that has done its work and become dead matter foreign to the animal economy. If we check this process by closing the lungs or skin or any other channel, the man speedily dies, poisoned by his own corruptions. Alcohol checks this removal of waste matter. The man "bloats," as we say, perhaps prides himself on his fullness of flesh, and goes about an incarnate sepulcher, ready to die of lockjaw if he runs a splinter into his hand, or to become the ready prey of any disease.

There is paralysis of intellect. The man of intelligence, or even of high ability, utters maudlin folly with the confidence that it is supreme wisdom, and takes the laughter that greets his idiotic absurdities as a tribute to the brilliancy of his wit. Poor mental paralytic! In a fair, bright day, on a calm sea, a commander orders an impossible maneuver, persists in it against all remonstrance of his subordinate officers, and sends a great battle-ship, with four hundred men, to the depths of the blue Mediterranean to rest till the sea shall give up its dead. The current explanation is that the commander's usually clear mind was clouded by alcoholic

mists. Whether that was the fact may not be surely known. But this is sure: all the world instantly feels that, if true, this was sufficient cause. All men know that a few glasses of liquor would be equal to producing just that result. There is no wisdom that may not be turned to folly by the paralysis of drink.

There is paralysis of affection. Alcohol makes the man who comes home one day with love and tenderness for wife and children to come home the next night an incarnate fiend, more dangerous to that family than a savage from the jungle. It leads him to drag them through years of poverty, hunger, cold, and wretchedness, while he squanders upon himself and his vile comrades in the saloon the wages that might support them in comfort.

There is paralysis of will. Who has ever tried to help the drunkard who has not found this failure of that godlike power? Here pledges fail. Here resolutions die. The man who knows that every step to the saloon is a step to shame, woe, and death, goes, drawn by an invisible but resistless power, as if under an enchanter's spell. He has come to what Coleridge called "complete impotence of volition."

There is one greater depth, and that is paralysis of conscience. While conscience lives, even with enfeebled will and mighty appetite, there is hope. There is something in the man to which we may appeal. But alcohol deadens, and at last paralyzes, the moral sensibilities, so that eight-tenths of the world's crimes are committed and most of its vices perpetrated while under its power. Either the liquor instigates to the crime, or it is taken expressly to deaden the conscience so that the crime may be done.

In a word, the magic effect of alcohol is to paralyze the nerve centers that are the seat of all the finer, nobler powers, while it stimulates to fierce activity those that are the seat of all the coarse, animal instincts. It paralyzes all that is godlike in man, and maddens and lets loose all the wild beast instincts of his nature.

Did space permit, it might be shown how for the nation this results in the paralysis of industry, as every shop and factory suffers from drunken workers; the paralysis of trade, as liquor destroys the buying power till millions are ragged and hungry and cold, while the bread and clothing and fuel they need are left unsold on the dealer's hands; that it is the paralysis of good government, as drunken citizens become the dupes or the purchased tools of the corrupt politician; that it is the paralysis of religion and the church, winning ten young men to the saloon for one that is drawn to the sanctuary.

But it is enough to say that this fell plague of paralysis is in the market; that half a million men are engaged in its manufacture and sale; that it is sold at a profit of 400 per cent.; that the American people pay \$1,200,000,000 every year in buying the palsy; and that the national government, most of the States, and a multitude of towns and cities look upon the spreading of this wasting paralysis among the people as one of the choicest sources of revenue, and that any attempt to stay the march of the disease is regarded as an infringement of personal liberty.

Across our land strides the grisly specter reaching out his deadly hands for all our noble, beautiful boys, the hope of the future of America and of the world. More than against the cholera that comes on the winds from afar, let us quarantine against the dread paralysis that is bred in the vat and the still, and sold over the bar within our own fair land. Let us make the quarantine wide as the nation sustained by the true hearts and strong hands and pure ballots of all the good. That quarantine against alcoholic paralysis we call National Prohibition.

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