

IS THERE A CURE FOR DRUNKENNESS?

AN INTERVIEW WITH CANON FLEMING.

BY FRED A. MCKENZIE.

IT is a debatable question whether intemperance is growing or diminishing among us. The three-bottle men have passed from our midst, although their great-grandsons are to-day reaping the fruits of their indulgence, in hereditary gout and the like. Unquestionably we are drinking more. The internal Revenue returns alone make that plain, for in half a century the expenditure on alcohol has multiplied many fold.

While open drunkenness has decreased strikingly among middle-class men, and while the person who indulges to excess in polite society is practically boycotted, intemperance has risen in other ways. Secret drinking among women of the middle class was never so great as to-day. In London, and in the great manufacturing towns of the Midlands, all workers among the poor know the great harm alcoholism is doing among working women. In many parts the women have their regular Monday "sprees," as their husbands have their Saturday off-days. In Manchester, and in the districts around Poplar and Mile End, one can see the women any Monday swarming to the public-house early in the day, and staying there till evening.

Along with this a new danger has arisen, a danger which attacks the most finely strung of the intellectual classes. The drug habit is not yet so prevalent here as in some of the great cities of America, or as in Paris, but it is growing, and growing rapidly. Among refined women, among men engaged in taxing literary or artistic pursuits, morphinism, the sulphonal habit, chlorodyne imbibition, and chloral taking are claiming many victims. Even cocaine, the deadliest drug of all, has its followers. The strain of modern life, the multiplicity of our engagements, the rush and hurry and absence of rest which are almost a necessary part of life in our great cities, make the temptation to fly to drugs or to alcohol greater to-day than ever before.

What can be done for those who have fallen under these habits? The majority of them have neither the will nor the strength voluntarily to refrain. All who have worked among these people are familiar with the unwilling drunkards who take the pledge

repeatedly, who strive to break the chain that binds them, and who swear to be done with it, but who are dragged back again time after time. These people need no telling of the misery they are bringing on themselves and friends. They know it.

Is there a cure? I recently had my attention drawn to the Keeley method of treating drunkenness, of which the London headquarters are at 6, Grenville Place, Cromwell Road, a method which it is claimed has during the past nine years been tried on several thousands of people in this country, and has in every case killed the drink craving. Ninety per cent. of these people, all of them once confirmed drunkards or drug-takers, have been, I was told, not only temporarily, but permanently cured. Treating inebriety as a disease, the Keeley method deals with it on medical lines. Of medical details it would be absurd for a layman to speak. The Keeley method has provoked the antagonism of the medical authorities in this country by remaining a secret cure. Hence doctors, while they have sent their patients to the Keeley establishment, have been unable to support it openly.

This matter of medical etiquette is an affair that concerns the doctors alone. What I wanted to learn, and to learn from an independent source, was, is the cure really satisfactory and lasting?

Here, happily, there were ready means of ascertaining the truth. Canon Fleming, the well known Vicar of St. Michael's, Chester Square, London, and for years one of the prominent temperance advocates in this country, has for over nine years closely watched the work of the Keeley cure. In November, 1892, he was appointed hon. chairman of an independent committee formed to inquire into the Keeley treatment, and he has since retained the position.

I saw Canon Fleming in his vicarage and found him a willing witness.

"I am glad," he said, "to tell you what I know of the Keeley treatment, for I have seen it work such wonderful results that it ought to be better known. How I became interested in the matter was thus. In 1892 Dr. Keeley came to this country with his



Photo by]

[Vandyk, Gloucester Road.

THE KEELEY INSTITUTE, 6, GRENVILLE PLACE, CROMWELL ROAD.

The centre house of the three shown.

remedy, and was promptly attacked by the leading medical papers. They declared that since he would not make the nature of his treatment public he was not to be supported. Now, you know, this sort of thing is apt to set a man's back up. Some well known gentlemen in London asked me to allow the use of my schoolroom to discuss the cure. I gladly consented, and offered to take the chair, stipulating, however, that it was to be clearly understood that I came merely as an inquirer, and did not by taking the chair endorse the affair in any way. But I felt that any treatment that made such claims as it did was worth investigating.

"The meeting was a remarkable one. Several Americans who had come from Dr. Keeley's Institute at Dwight, Illinois, testified how they had been cured from habitual and long-standing drunkenness. At the end of the meeting one of my congregation, Mr. William Cunard, moved, and Mr. Amos Scholfield, the temperance reformer, seconded, that an independent committee be formed to obtain information, and in due course prepare a report on the results of Dr. Keeley's treatment. I was chosen as chairman of this committee, and the other members nominated at this meeting

were Dr. James Edmunds, of the London Temperance Hospital; Mr. James H. Raper, the veteran temperance advocate; Mr. William Saunders, M.P.; and Mr. W. Hind Smith, of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A. Later the committee itself added to their members Mr. Cunard, Mr. Scholfield, and Dr. Donald Baynes. Mr. Saunders and Mr. Cunard found themselves unable to take an active part on the committee, and after a time Dr. Baynes and Dr. Edmunds felt it necessary to withdraw on account of the cure being a secret one.

"The committee set to work to investigate what the Keeley cure was doing, and what its permanent results were on people adopting it in this country. As you know, the system does not employ any restraint or outward compulsion. The man taking the cure is allowed

alcohol when he first enters the Institute. An injection under the skin is given four times a day—at nine a.m., at one p.m., at five p.m., and at nine p.m.—and at the same time a powerful tonic is administered. Men come almost on the verge of, or in *delirium tremens*. On the first day they drink; the second day they drink—but not so much; by the third or fourth day, by their own free will, they refuse to touch it. An aversion has sprung up in them to alcohol in any shape or form. The craving is gone. The treatment lasts a month, or, in cases of drug-taking, often five or six weeks. I have seen men start perfect wrecks, and go out at the end with their bleared eyes bright, their will-power restored, their manhood brought back. The cures I have seen seem to me almost miraculous.

"Once a year our committee met, when all the cases that had been treated were invited to meet us. Large numbers came up at their own expense. I remember one man told me he had been in a well known inebriate home. 'I was,' he said, 'there for nine months, and though I was kept from the drink, I would have given anything to have it. I would have dashed my arm through the glass window to get a brandy bottle any

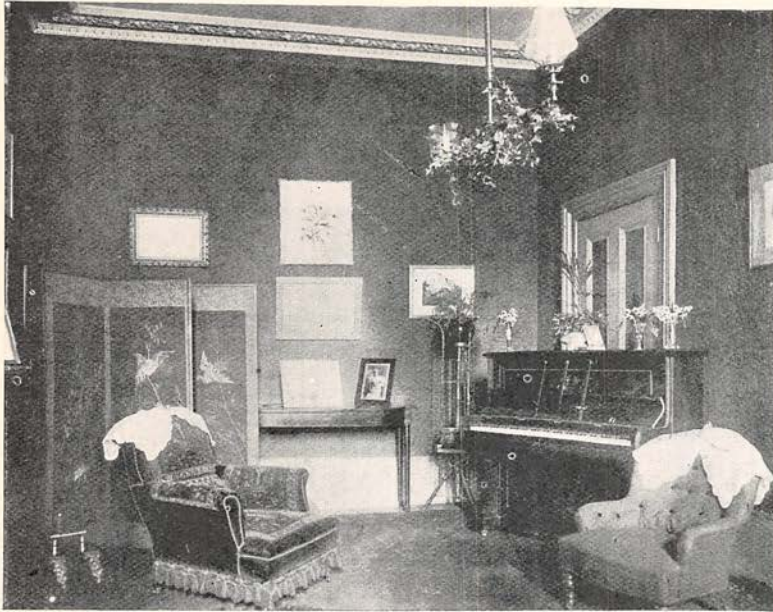


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[W. H. Bennett.

A CORNER OF THE LADIES' DRAWING-ROOM.

day. The day I came out of the inebriate home I went straight back to the liquor, and was quite drunk by five o'clock that afternoon. My brother, who came to meet me, brought me away that night to the Keeley home. My craving was killed there. I do not want to drink now.'

"Let me recall another case, in some ways the most striking I have met. One day, when as a member of the committee I visited the Keeley establishment, then located in Portland Place, I saw there a man with bloodshot eyes and an angry and resentful air—the kind of man one would not have cared to meet alone in a dark lane at night. He looked ready to do anything. I watched that man afterwards. I saw how he changed, how he became sober and an active temperance worker. Later on he told me his story. 'I began to drink,' he said, 'when I was a middy. I kept on and on, till at last I would drink anything I could lay my lips on, and in consequence was dismissed from Her Majesty's service. Then I entered the Chinese service, and my drunkenness disgraced me there. I could not resist the drink. I tried the treatment, a desperate man whose life had been ruined. Afterwards I found myself able to go among my old friends when they were drinking, surrounded by spirits and wines of every kind, and not even wish to touch them.'

"I remember," Canon Fleming continued,

"one Sunday after Holy Communion service one of my curates remarked to me about a lady who had refused the cup in the service. I had noticed it, too, and while we were talking my clerk came in and said that a lady in the church wished to speak with me. It was the same lady.

"'Canon Fleming,' she said, 'I want your advice. I have in the past given way to intemperance. My husband, an officer in Her Majesty's service, has had to leave me because

of it. I have gone through the Keeley treatment, and have been perfectly cured, but have resolved never again to taste wine in any shape or form, even in the Sacrament. I want to know, Canon Fleming, if I am wrong in this. Do you think that I am a coward in being afraid even to sip it in church?'

"'Madam,' I said, 'I think you are quite right. So far from being a coward, I think it the bravest thing you have ever done in your life. God, who knows it all, will look at your heart.'

"Afterwards I learned her story. Her husband occupied a prominent position, and she had terribly disgraced him by her drinking habits. Time after time she would be carried in by the police to her home, drunk. At last the husband had left her. I wrote to him, telling him of his wife's cure, and asking him to come and see her. He replied, 'It is no use your writing to me; nothing could reform my wife. I have tried everything for her, and everything has failed.' But eventually he was reconciled to her. 'I always thought,' he said, 'my wife could have stopped if she wanted to. I never realised that with her this was a disease.' They started their home again, and to-day that wife is a sober and a happy woman, well known in high circles.

"I could go on," Canon Fleming continued, "giving you cases of all kinds that I

have seen. I have watched them, not only for a month, but year after year since 1892.

"Clergymen? Yes, I am sorry to say that more than fifty of them have been through the cure. Forty-four of these are to-day well and back at work. I have seen men of every class, and women, too.

"Does the cure last? I have carefully kept track of it for nine years, and have seen the cases from the beginning permanently remain steady. I am often asked if it does not injure the brain in some ways. I can only say, with Dr. de Wolf, that it is drink which injures and beclouds the brain. This cure will give men back their brain clear and unclouded again.

"I well remember, soon after I took the chairmanship of the committee, my old friend, Sir Andrew Clark, the great physician, stopped me one day. 'Canon,' he said, 'I am amazed that a man of your influence should lend himself to the work of this quack Keeley. Here is a man who says he has a cure for drunkenness, and keeps it secret.'

"'Well, Sir Andrew,' I replied, 'from your point of view your objection may be very well. I can quite understand that doctors should be bound by the rules of their profession, which compel them to discountenance secret remedies, but I am not a doctor, though I am a physician's son. I am a free-lance, and the rules of your medical profession do not bind me. I want first of all to find out if this treatment is really the good thing it professes to be, and I shall be quite ready to discuss the question of its secret nature afterwards. Besides, supposing it is secret now, no good thing can be secret for ever. I am not sure that your medical rule of preventing men benefiting from their discoveries is not against the law of patents. Had it been in force in the Middle Ages we should have lost many of the great discoveries that have come down to us to-day, for men would have had no incentive to investigation.'

"And so I say still, the question of the secrecy or otherwise of this great cure is with me quite a secondary matter. The real question is, does it achieve what it claims to do? I have found that it does, and my confidence in it is stronger than ever."



James Keeley
M.D. L.S.D.

Photo by American Biograph Publishing Co., Chicago.



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THE MEN'S READING-ROOM.

[W. H. Bunnett.

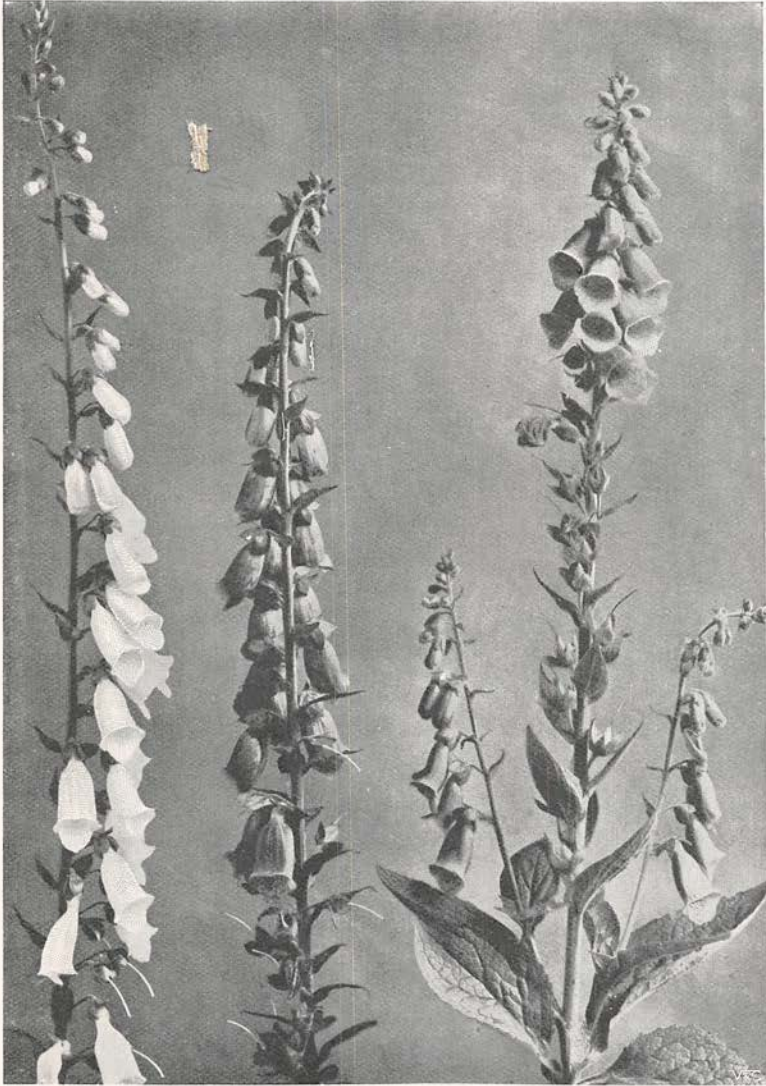
Further investigations among others who had watched the workings of the Keeley method confirmed Canon Fleming's views. Frankly, I do not understand how the Keeley treatment does its work. On the face of it, it appears incredible that any medicines should in a month eradicate the craving created by, it may be, a score of years of excess. Those of us who have had opportunities of watching dipsomaniacs know best

the terrible nature of the slavery that holds them. For slavery truly it is, in which every moment of enjoyment is paid for by hours of misery and shame and physical suffering.

Yet the total evidence which came to me in many ways showed that by some physical process, by some change of appetite or treatment of the degenerate tissue, the

craving for stimulants or narcotics is cut away almost at a stroke.

One would naturally expect that such a change would only be produced at the cost of great physical disturbance. This is not so. Instead of being depressed, the patients are, in every case I came across, physically improved. The keynote of the system is that drunkenness is a disease, to be treated as such.



FOXGLOVES.

A photographic study by H. Treng.