

To use liquor is to the nervous system like placing sand in a watch: it wears out rapidly, making it a worthless thing. -- Luther Burbank

The human race has been pouring alcohol down its throat for more centuries than there is a record of, and the human race is still here, and so is the corner bar. Yet so far as the popular belief, saws and literature on alcoholism can tell you, the race should have been burned clear to hell before Egypt. -- Ferdinand C. Helwig, M.D.

DRUNKENNESS

"The best of life is but intoxication."¹ Do you think so? What is drunkenness? Is drink harmful?

Being interested in this subject of alcoholism, I decided to investigate it in order to better answer these questions. Do not think that I mean to influence the reader either pro or con as to the alcohol problem. This is merely a presentation of the facts and ideas that I uncovered in my research.

To be able to tell whether or not a man is drunk is sometimes a difficult problem. According to science, when the brain receives the stimulus or spur or encouragement or whatever it receives from the first drop of alcohol, the individual is drunk. This first impulse, however, is no indication to society of inebriation.

There are evidently three stages of actual or noticeable drunkenness.² The first stage is a blunting of the capacity for self-criticism. Along with this go all feelings of care and despair and the sense of humor. True; the drunk may be humorous enough, but, unless the joke is on someone else, he is apt to become angry or even enraged. The advance into the second stage is apparent enough. The intoxicant begins to lose muscular coordination and sense of perception. This is evident from his incoherent and mushy speech and his top heaviness in walking. The "pavement, faithless to the fuddled

¹ Byron, Lord George Gordon

² Christian Century, Dec. 24, 1930, p 1591

foot"³ is clearly demonstrated. Undoubtedly he is now in the most comical stage or the funniest to observers. Seeing double is also connected with this condition. In the last inevitable stage narcosis is complete; the drunk falls into a stupor or a gutter or anything else at hand.

It is these stages and their after-effects which has led the jury of science to deliver a verdict against alcohol.

In comparing alcohol with water, the following have been listed: ⁴

WATER	ALCOHOL
Will not burn.	Burns easily.
Has no taste.	Has burning taste.
Cools and refreshes the skin.	Burns and inflames the skin.
Is necessary to healthy life.	Is unnecessary to healthy life.
Makes a seed grow.	Kills the seed.
Softens all foods.	Hardens all foods.
Is itself a food.	Is a poison.
Will not dissolve resin.	Easily dissolves resin.
Does not intoxicate.	Intoxicates.
Benefits the body.	Injures the body.
Aids decomposition.	Prevents decomposition.
Quenches thirst.	Creates thirst.

On the other hand some authors of reputation firmly believe that all this critical literature has been " ...literature of truth and exact science, not at all the sort of hoopla absorbed as gospel by those bossy souls who can't abide anyone's feeling good, or the smell of whiskey, or the expense; or have vinegar in their blood or salvation in their souls; and in gen-

³ Francis Thompson

⁴ Deets Pickett, "Alcohol and the New Age", p 18

eral combine a wide ignorance of their subject with a hot urge to meddle."⁵ They further contend that liquor is not the direct cause of most of the diseases allegedly brought about by over-indulgence. "Liquor alone and nothing else, just like ship's-biscuits, bully beef and nothing else, can blast the system." ⁶ they freely admit but are convinced of its harmlessness along with a regular diet.

This attitude is often chosen, either by habit or naive curiosity or sport, as a good excuse for a drink. It works, often leads to drunkenness, and leaves an engineer or most anyone in a helluva condition to do Thermodynamics homework.

⁵ Walter Hall Smith and Ferdinand C. Helwig, M.D., "Liquor: The servant of Man"

⁶ *ibid*

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