

terruption of an importunate "man from Porlock," ever accursed in the history of the human race!

IV.

Consider the debt of mankind to opium. It is abused by the deaths of a few wastrels from its abuse?

For the importance of this paper is the discussion of the practical question: should drugs be accessible to the public?

Here I pause in order to beg the indulgence of the American people. I am obliged to take a standpoint at once startling and unpopular. I am compelled to utter certain terrible truths. I am in the unenviable position of one who asks others to shut their eyes to the particular that they may thereby visualize the general.

But I believe that in the matter of legislation America is proceeding in the main upon a totally false theory. I believe that constructive morality is better than repression. I believe that democracy, more than any other form of government, should trust the people, as it specifically pretends to do.

Now it seems to me better and bolder tactics to attack the opposite theory at its very strongest point.

It should be shown that not even in the most arguable case is a government justified in restricting use on account of abuse; or allowing justification, let us dispute about expediency.

So, to the bastion—should "habit-forming" drugs be accessible to the public?

The matter is of immediate interest; for the admitted failure of the Harrison Law has brought about a new proposal—one to make bad worse.

I will not here argue the grand thesis of liberty. Free men have long since decided it. Who will maintain that Christ's willing sacrifice of his life was immoral, because it robbed the State of a useful taxpayer?

No; a man's life is his own, and he has the right to destroy it as he will, unless he too egregiously intrude on the privileges of his neighbors.

But this is just the point. In modern times the whole community is one's neighbor, and one must not damage that. Very good; then there are pros and cons, and a balance to be struck.

In America the prohibition idea in all things is carried, mostly by hysterical newspapers, to a fanatical extreme. "Sensation at any cost by Sunday next" is the equivalent in most editorial rooms of the alleged German order to capture Calais. Hence the dangers of anything and everything are celebrated dithyrambically by the Corybants of the press, and the only remedy is prohibition. A shoots B with a revolver; remedy, the Sullivan law. In practice, this works well enough; for the law is not enforced against the householder who keeps a revolver for his protection, but is a handy weapon against the gangster, and saves the police the trouble of proving felonious intent.

But it is the idea that was wrong. Recently a man shot his family and himself with a rifle fitted with a Maxim silencer. Remedy, a bill to prohibit Maxim silencers! No perception that, if the man had not had a weapon at all, he would have strangled his family with his hands.

American reformers seem to have no idea, at any time or in any connection, that the only remedy for wrong is right; that moral education, self-con-

trol, good manners, will save the world; and that legislation is not merely a broken reed, but a suffocating vapor. Further, an excess of legislation defeats its own ends. It makes the whole population criminals, and turns them all into policemen and police spies. The moral health of such a people is ruined for ever; only revolution can save it.

Now in America the Harrison law makes it theoretically impossible for the layman, difficult even for the physician, to obtain "narcotic drugs." But every other Chinese laundry is a distributing centre for cocaine, morphia, and heroin. Negroes and street peddlers also do a roaring trade. Some people figure that one in every five persons in Manhattan is addicted to one or other of these drugs. I can hardly believe this estimate, though the craving for amusement is maniacal among this people who have so little care for art, literature, or music, who have, in short, none of the resources that the folk of other nations, in their own cultivated minds, possess.

V.

It was a very weary person, that hot Summer afternoon in 1909, who tramped into Logroño. Even the river seemed too lazy to flow, and stood about in pools, with its tongue hanging out, so to speak. The air shimmered softly; in the town the terraces of the cafés were thronged with people. They had nothing to do, and a grim determination to do it. They were sipping the rough wine of the Pyrenees, or the Riojo of the South well watered, or toying with bocks of pale beer. If any of them could have read Major-General O'Ryan's address to the American soldier, they would have supposed his mind to be affected.

"Alcohol, whether you call it beer, wine, whisky, or by any other name, is a breeder of inefficiency. While it affects men differently, the results are the same, in that all affected by it cease for the time to be normal. Some become forgetful, others quarrelsome. Some become noisy, some get sick, some get sleepy, others have their passions greatly stimulated."

As for ourselves, we were on the march to Madrid. We were obliged to hurry. A week, or a month, or a year at most, and we must leave Logroño in obedience to the trumpet call of duty.

However, we determined to forget it, for the time. We sat down, and exchanged views and experiences with the natives. From the fact that we were hurrying, they adjudged us to be anarchists, and were rather relieved at our explanation that we were "mad Englishmen." And we were all happy together; and I am still kicking myself for a fool that I ever went on to Madrid.

If one is at a dinner party in London or New York, one is plunged into an abyss of dullness. There is no subject of general interest; there is no wit; it is like waiting for a train. In London one overcomes one's environment by drinking a bottle of champagne as quickly as possible; in New York one piles in cocktails. The light wines and beers of Europe, taken in moderate measure, are no good; there is not time to be happy, so one must be excited instead. Dining alone, or with friends, as opposed to a party, one can be quite at ease with Burgundy or Bordeaux. One has all night to be happy, and one does not have to speed. But the regular New Yorker has not time even for a dinner-party! He almost regrets the hour when his office closes. His brain is still busy with his