

THE GROWTH AND POWER OF APPETITE.

One fact attendant on habitual drinking stands out so prominently that none can call it in question. It is that of the steady growth of appetite. There are exceptions, as in the action of nearly every rule; but the almost invariable result of the habit we have mentioned, is, as we have said, a steady growth of appetite for the stimulant imbibed. That this is in consequence of certain morbid changes in the physical condition produced by the alcohol itself, will hardly be questioned by any one who has made himself acquainted with the various functional and organic derangements which invariably follow the continued introduction of this substance into the body.

But it is to the fact itself, not to its cause, that we now wish to direct your attention. The man who is satisfied at first with a single glass of wine at dinner, finds, after awhile, that appetite asks for a little more; and, in time, a second glass is conceded. The increase of desire may be very slow, but it goes on surely until, in the end, a whole bottle will scarcely suffice, with far too many, to meet its imperious demands. It is the same in regard to the use of every other form of alcoholic drink.

Now, there are men so constituted that they are able, for a long series of years, or even for a whole lifetime, to hold this appetite within a certain limit of indulgence. To say "So far, and no farther." They suffer ultimately from physical ailments, which surely follow the prolonged contact of alcoholic poison with the delicate structures of the body, many of a painful character, and shorten the term of their natural lives; but still they are able to drink without an increase of appetite so great as to reach an overmastering degree. They do not become abandoned drunkards.

No man safe who drinks. -----

But no man who begins the use of alcohol in any form can tell what, in the end, is going to be its effect on his body or mind. Thousands and tens of thousands, once wholly unconscious of danger from this source, go down yearly into drunkards' graves. There is no standard by which any one can measure the latent evil forces in his inherited nature. He may have from ancestors, near or remote, an unhealthy moral tendency, or physical diathesis, to which the peculiarly disturbing influence of alcohol will give the morbid condition in which it will find its disastrous life. That such results follow the use of alcohol in a large number of cases, is now a well-known fact in the history of inebriation. The subject of alcoholism, with the mental and moral causes leading thereto, have attracted a great deal of earnest attention. Physicians, superintendents of inebriate and lunatic asylums, prison-keepers, legislators and philanthropists

have been observing and studying its many sad and terrible phases, and recording results and opinions. While differences are held on some points, as, for instance, whether drunkenness is a disease for which, after it has been established, the individual ceases to be responsible, and should be subject to restraint and treatment, as for lunacy or fever; a crime to be punished; or a sin to be repented of and healed by the Physician of souls, all agree that there is an inherited or acquired mental and nervous condition with many, which renders any use of alcohol exceedingly dangerous.

The point we wish to make with you is, that no man can possibly know, until he has used alcoholic drinks for a certain period of time, whether he has or has not this hereditary or acquired physical or mental condition; and that, if it should exist, a discovery of the fact may come too late.

Dr. D.G. Dodge, late Superintendent of the New York State Inebriate Asylum, speaking of the causes leading to intemperance, after stating his belief that it is a transmissible disease, like "scrofula, gout or consumption," says:

"There are men who have an organization, which may be termed an alcoholic idiosyncrasy; with them the latent desire for stimulants, if indulged, soon leads to habits of intemperance, and eventually to a morbid appetite, which has all the characteristics of a diseased condition of the system, which the patient, unassisted, is powerless to relieve since the weakness of the will that led to the disease obstructs its removal.

"Again, we find in another class of persons, those who have had healthy parents, and have been educated and accustomed to good social influences, moral and social, but whose temperament and physical constitution are such, that, when they once indulge in the use of stimulants, which they find pleasurable, they continue to habitually indulge till they cease to be moderate, and become excessive drinkers. A depraved appetite is established, that leads them on slowly, but surely, to destruction."