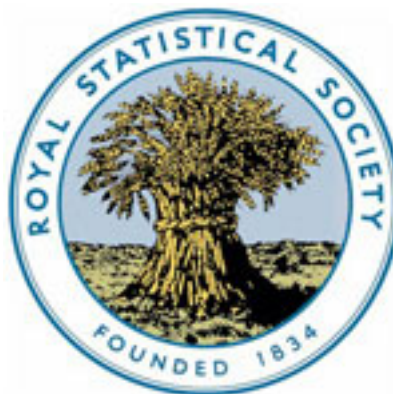


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La Question de L'Alcool: Allégations et Réalités by Yves-Guyot

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communities may be unaffected although surrounded by the disease, while there is some, although rather scanty, evidence of a relation between the prevalence of poliomyelitis and the distribution of rats (undue incidence upon tenements on water fronts, concentration of cases around food stores, tendency to spread through buildings but not necessarily through families, etc.). The part played by personal contagion is obscure. Here the New York investigators were hampered, as have been most sanitary inquirers, by an inadequate appreciation of the statistical *quaesita*. Mere records of the frequency of multiple family or house infections throw little or no light upon the problem. Clearly we must know much more before we can learn whether the distribution of cases is or is not random. It is possible to formulate many statistical hypotheses, but the data for testing these hypotheses are wanting. Naturally the New York writers were influenced by the current trend of scientific thought in regard both to aetiology and treatment. Much space is devoted to the possibility of insect transmission and of serum therapy. So far as serum therapy is concerned, the writers have not felt justified in going beyond the remark (somewhat suggestive of Mr. Justice Stareleigh) that "the results obtained seemed to be favourable when the serum was used in suitable cases in the pre-paralytic stages of the disease." As to insect transmitters, even the flea might count upon a grand jury ignoring the bill exhibited against him, while the remaining arthropods leave the court without a stain upon their characters.

One last analogy with plague epidemic may be mentioned; the luxuriant growth of quack remedies. Many philanthropists favoured the public health department with suggestions, and the New York sanitarians think a prize should be awarded to the following:—

"Place hydrogen conductors at soles of feet and hands, and cause attraction for this fine hydrogen by negative electricity or negative applications. Apply cantharides or mustard plasters. Diet must be high in fine oxygen, such as rice, bread and oxygen waters. Give oxygen through lower extremities by positive electricity. Frequent baths using almond meal, or oxidising the water. Application of poultices or Roman chamomile, slippery elm, arnica, mustard, cantharis, amygdalae dulcis oil, and of special merit, spikenard oil and Xanthoxolinum. Internally use, caffeine, Fl. Kola, dry muriate of quinine, elixir of cinchona, radium water, chloride of gold, liquor calcis and wine of pepsin." M.G.

10.—*La Question de l'Alcool : Allégations et Réalités*. Par Yves-Guyot. 288 pp., 8vo. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1917. Price 3 fr. 50 c.

There is no end to the fight over the drink question, and now M. Guyot has entered the lists as a protagonist. Years ago, when chief editor of the *Journal des Economistes*, he declared that whenever an industry was menaced, whatever the source of the attack, or its pretext, he would come forward to defend it. This is not altogether the best attitude of mind in which to approach a question too often

left to the handling of extremists, and we confess to disappointment at finding M. Guyot ranging himself alongside the *laissez faire* disputants, who cry "Hands off the liquor trade!"

It is easy to argue against the extremist, but in so doing it appears difficult to avoid the opposite extreme. Vehemence and bias are apt to do duty for reasoning and truth. Thus M. Guyot comes perilously near suggesting that the British nation owes its position in the vanguard of civilisation to roast beef, beer, and whisky. This, of course, is mere rhetoric, but it lays the writer open to ridicule from the prohibitionist, and does not help the ordinary person to an understanding of the real merits of the drink question. This is not the only passage in the book which is more picturesque than weighty.

The fact is, of course, that alcoholic drink is neither wholly good nor wholly bad. If its abuse does not call for such a drastic remedy as complete prohibition, as many people demand, neither does the principle of freedom or justice require that society should allow its members to get drunk as often as they like, as other people seem to think. There can be no doubt in the mind of anyone who studies the facts that, at any rate in some countries, the existence of unrestricted drinking facilities is harmful to the State. Nor can any doubt be entertained by anyone who knows the history of the drink traffic in the United Kingdom during the past three years that restrictive action by the State can be effective and beneficial. This is not to say that, in any given circumstances, the State can go on restricting consumption to vanishing point and still produce satisfactory results. This has been demonstrated recently in this country, where popular demand has led to a relaxation of the restriction on the output of beer.

We do not wish to suggest that M. Guyot's book is all declamation. It is not. But it is primarily a hot counter-attack on the "*anti-alcoholomanes*," and we could wish that he had written a better-balanced book.

A.D.W.

11.—*Business Statistics*. Harvard Business Studies, Vol. III. Edited by Melvin T. Copeland, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Marketing, Harvard University. xii + 696 pp., 8vo. Harvard University Press, 1917. Price \$3.75.

"Business Statistics," it is stated in the preface, "are numerical statements of facts, exclusive of financial accounts, which are used in business administration . . . (1) external statistics, generally publicly available, which indicate the general trend of business and market conditions, and (2) internal statistics, which are concerned with the private operations of an individual business establishment. . . . Internal statistics include those obtained from the sales, advertising, and factory reports of an individual firm or company."

The volume begins with three sections on statistical methods. The first, by Dr. Copeland, deals with schedules of enquiry, averages, modes, &c.; the second, by Mr. G. P. Watkins, is a quasi-scientific