

## THE ANTI-ALCOHOL MOVEMENT AND THE EUROPEAN WAR.

By GEO. B. EAGER, D.D., LL.D., Louisville, Ky.

The daybreak of the Anti-Alcohol movement in Europe came before the outbreak of the war and in its entirety it constitutes, as Prof. Fick of Wurtzburg, well says, "the most important phenomenon of our epoch—weightier than state affairs, wars and concluded peaces."

That such a revolutionary movement should have sprung up so quickly and become so widely influential in spite of such a dead weight of tradition and custom as it had to face is one of the striking facts of history. Another striking fact, discreditable to us, is that a development of such magnitude and world-wide significance should have gained so little recognition and publicity in America.

Mr. Ernest Gordon, in a book on the subject that will come as a startling revelation to most of us, "The Anti-Alcohol Movement in Europe,"\* says, "One had little right to expect much from the American press in view of its relations to alcoholic capital and, speaking generally, its unintelligence concerning European affairs."

"One would have thought," said Dr. Blocher of Switzerland, in one of the late Congresses against alcoholism, "that the statistics (given at a former Congress) would have run through the press like a prairie fire, would have been eagerly discussed and used to shake the people out of their lethargy. Nothing of the sort! Hardly any of the daily papers took any notice of the matter at all." "I cannot characterize these newspapers, which are in the service of those who bring misery, crime and sickness on our people," he says with just severity, "otherwise than a moral pest. Suppose we had cholera in the country. What would happen to the journalists who misused their influential position to bait

\* Revell Co., New York.

and mock the physicians, secrete the greatness of the danger, publish colored statistics and false reports, seeking in every way to play into the hands of the epidemic?"

This remarkable continental movement is generally dated from the publication of Prof. von Bunge's *Die Alkoholfrage* in 1886. Before then abstinence ideas had taken root in Scandinavia, but German-speaking lands were untouched by them. In 1893 there was but one known abstainer in the German Empire, George Asmussen, who later played such a brilliant rôle in the organization of the movement. In opening the course on Alcoholism in the *Baracken* Auditorium of Berlin University in 1906, the lecturer announced that ten years before scientific courses for the study of Alcoholism would hardly have been conceivable. "I hope for a speedy victory, however," he said, "because sixteen years ago I was the only person in the Empire who publicly spoke out for total abstinence."

About the same time (1907) a petition to the British Government signed by 15,000 physicians for anti-alcoholic instruction in the schools marked the beginning of the movement in Great Britain, and kindred beginnings were witnessed in France and Russia. Indeed, as one writer says, a wide-spread revolution in opinion, resembling the bursting of a forest's bare branches into greenery after a few days of spring warmth, followed throughout Europe. The movement in Germany spread until it touched all classes from the Kaiser on the throne to the Socialist in the back street. It was University born and so won the adhesion of university professors and leaders throughout the Empire, but it went hand in hand with a popular movement, which was singularly well organized and well led. It was as if tens of thousands of Germans had suddenly awakened to the humiliation of their *beer* past and were now determined to atone for it by the intensity of their present antagonism. Dr. Mathaei,

a staff physician in the German army, voiced the general opinion of the German Anti-Alcoholists in these words: "We should not discuss moderation with a man. The thing has been settled by science. The use of these narcotic poisons is ruinous and criminal. The 'moderate drinker' should be punished for it socially until we can get leave to punish legally. It must be considered incompatible with the honor of a city or government to allow activities of poison factories, such as breweries and distilleries." Hundreds of thousands of Germans avowedly favored limiting the sale of alcohol to the apothecary's shop with chloroform, arsenic and belladonna. Petitions went up to the Reichstag one year with half a million signatures filling nineteen bound volumes, favoring at least local prohibition; and among the signers were such men as Professors Häckel of Jena, Toennies of Kiel, Bousset of Göttingen, Paul Barth of Leipzig and Dr. Horneffer of Munich.

"In their uncompromising 'idealism'", says Mr. Gordon, "they remind one of those Germans of an earlier Reformation, who came to the Diet of Spires with the word *Protestavi* wrought into their coat-sleeves." In keeping with this spirit Prof. von Bunge exclaimed: "To the fight, then, with the battle cry of our great reformer:

'And though the world with demons filled  
Should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed  
His truth to triumph through us.' "

A large group of German "Moderates" formed a League and initiated a genuine activity against Alcoholism. One of its unions had among its early leaders Marshal von Moltke and the great Finance Minister Miquel. It was recognized by and had great influence with the government. It won many adherents who under the impulse gained passed over into the ranks of the abstinents. It sought to stop all serving of alcoholic drinks in

hospitals and asylums, organized the first Congress for the Alcohol-free Education of Youth and induced the government to give out Anti-Alcoholic cards and literature to all mothers at the vaccination of their new-born babes, as well as to furnish every child entering a Berlin school to take home to its mother cards explaining the injury which alcohol does, particularly to the child. The ultimate influence of a movement so multiform and thorough-going cannot be overestimated.

It was called "The League Against the Misuse of Intoxicants," but it is not, as the name might suggest to Americans, a mere obstructive group of "moderate drinkers." It carried on for years before the war the most aggressive and effective activities including the most extensive distribution of Anti-Alcoholic literature to the university clubs, to officers and men of the army and navy, to the Masonic lodges, to the Department of Justice for distribution in prisons, to the Department of Agriculture in the form of charts for placing on the walls of the agricultural schools throughout the entire country, to the trades unions of miners, to the great "industrials" of Frankfort, to the automobile clubs and manufacturers for distribution among the chauffeurs, to the administrative, legal and professional papers matter relating specifically to alcohol and crime and to the hospitals for use among their patients, for both prisons and hospitals are wide-open to temperance agitation. As a result university circles, professors and students, before the war began, were said to be far less favorable than formerly to the drink customs. The same was true of the personnel of army and navy, as well as of trades unions, leaders in workmen's insurance and many other important groups. One is reminded by its activities among working men of a saying of Bismarck's, that if the workmen's protective code could be extended to the protection against the *diabolus Germanicus*, the drink devil, a great part of the social question would be solved

at once; and of the watchword proposed by Dr. Delbrück, "*Gambrinum delendum est*. Let the slogan go forth in all civilized lands, *war on beer*;" and of Gladstone's words in the House of Commons in 1880 that the ravages of drink in England were worse than those which war, famine and pestilence combined occasioned; or those of another of the German leaders of that time, "Surely here is an enemy more to be dreaded than the Corsican."

Similar stirrings and achievements were witnessed in Austria. In 1912 Prof. Hirth and fifteen other members of the Landtag, in view of "the alcoholization of Moravia," urged the giving of the electorate power to forbid the import and sale of alcoholic drinks in all the communes, and pressed for compulsory temperance instruction in all public schools, after the example of Canada and the United States, and the instruction of the personnel of the army and navy concerning the danger of the use of alcohol. This may be taken as typical of what went on in all Austria-Hungary.

The state of public opinion in France, the anxiety about the drink evil which filled the minds and hearts of the Frenchmen at that time, may be gathered from some utterances of men of great eminence in the social and political life of that land.

M. Joseph Reinach, deputy from the Rhone, one of the leaders among contemporary statesmen in 1910, sounded the alarm for a national uprising against the drink evil in these words: "For men of courage and goodwill of all parties, for the government itself, there is no single duty more pressing today than that of engaging in a systematic and irresistible campaign against alcoholism. The hour has come to act. I know how important other political and social questions are, but, before all, one must live, one must be saved from death; and I am not exaggerating the danger, if France is to be saved from death she must burn out the canker which

is eating into her, which is making greater ravages in the twentieth century than famine and the Black Death in the Middle Ages.

“The authorities know that alcoholism is a chief cause of the impoverishment of extensive regions of our country, that it plays a large part in our national depopulation and that year by year it reduces the productive and military strength of our land. But the state draws a huge, immediate income from alcohol, and there are not many governments that see further than the evening of the day on which the vote of confidence is taken.

“The consequences of this immense national poisoning—who does not know them? They are written in the very flesh of our people. Ask at the Ministry of Justice for statistics of criminality; at the Ministry of the Interior for those of madness, suicide, tuberculosis; and at the Ministry of War for the statistics of diminished recruitment. Our suicides have doubled; our madmen number 70,000; our rejected recruits have tripled. Crimes of blood increase, and the vast majority of the murderers are alcoholists, or children of alcoholists.

“Private initiative has done much—soldiers and civilians, men of all parties and all faiths, writers, lawyers, physicians, teachers—we thank them all. Since they have succeeded in awakening the conscience of France ultimate victory will surely be ours.”

Prof. Leopold Mabileau, one of the great social workers of the world, at the head of a co-operative and mutual insurance association with 5,000,000 members, declared in a Sorbonne Conference about the same time, that his association met checks and difficulties which did not exist twenty years before. “All about Paris, for example, in the most industrious and conscientious populations, we can no longer find young people to join us. Indeed old members are dropping away unable, they say, to pay the slight yearly fees. Whence this danger that has so suddenly assailed us? Gentlemen, the criminal is alcohol!

We have undertaken to fight against disease and to help the sick. In certain Parisian groups expenses have tripled, so great has been the increase of sickness. What was slight indisposition ten years ago has become now incurable malady. That is the fruit of alcohol. Drink has in vast numbers of cases rendered the laborer incapable of paying the monthly pittance which secured him medical relief and accident insurance."

M. Leon Burgeois, at the head of a most important social organization, a federation in fact of all the important French social workers, confirms and amplifies all that these others have said: "This scourge of drink has a primal and causal place in all our social miseries. A veritable Proteus, it assumes all aspects. It hides itself behind tuberculosis, in madness, in crime, but it is always at the bottom of all our evils, of all our degeneracies. It is the chief menace to the family, the race, the greatness of France, her existence even. It is the National peril, against which we must take up a national crusade with the cry of '*Alcohol—the Enemy!*'"

M. de Casabianca, a distinguished Parisian judge, known for his humane interests, attributes the great growth of juvenile crime in France, which the Academy of Moral Science pronounces "something wholly new, a real menace to the future, a blow in the face of those who thought to regenerate us by revolutionizing popular education," "first to the advance of Alcoholism, then to the want or insufficiency of religious and moral education."

M. Henri Robert, a great criminal lawyer of Paris, confirms this judgment: "You may count as a powerful factor in the growth of juvenile criminality, the absence of religious ideas, and the official atheism of the schools, aided by *the corrupting advance of alcohol.*"

Dr. Baretier, a noted author and publicist, says: "What is the most sinister feature of the situation in France today? It is the fact that the country as well as the city is sinking down to an alcoholic death," and he

cites appalling statistics and facts to support his assertion. "Fifty per cent of the sick," says Dr. Laborde, "belong to the category of *alcoholic*."

M. Reinach gives this terrible summary of the state into which the French people had fallen:

"Of our half million drink shops one-tenth provide at the same time alcohol and women. Fifty thousand of these *cabarets* in France furnish *filles en carte* (girls according to order). In many garrison and seaport cities one-half of these girls are minors; and Barthelemy declares that everywhere alcoholism is the accomplice of syphilis. It has diminished the physical and moral value of the laboring class, weakened army conscription by an ever-increasing number of men rejected for alcoholic degeneracies, created an appalling number of *ataxiques*, insane, epileptics, hysterics, vagabonds, and prostitutes, given us 80 per cent of our juvenile criminals, piled up colossal costs, not only in drink consumed, but in days of labor lost, expenses for sick and insane, outlays for the repression of crime, estimated at three milliards a year, and a dismal proportion of alcoholic voters, neurotic, impulsive, half-fools, and *apaches*—we must add together the sum total of all these in order to realize how the country is tainted and vitiated in its life sources and forces. The nation is no less sick than the individuals whose intestines, lungs and kidneys have become diseased by drink."

As to Russia, much has been said and written about her startling abolition of alcoholic drinks since the beginning of the war. But the Anti-alcohol movement in Russia, too, antedates this war. The realization of the deteriorating and disastrous part played by alcohol in Russian life was by no means a sudden growth. It resulted in part from Russia's humiliating defeat in the war with Japan. Criticism awakened and inquiries started then led ultimately to a sweeping governmental



reform. It became painfully evident that the governmental policy of deriving vast revenues from the manufacture and sale of alcohol and the methodical stimulation of the desire for it, was undermining, not only the manhood of the army, but the life of the nation as well. The final prohibition act, going into effect on November 14, was the last of three distinct decrees, the first simply curtailing the sale of vodka, the second abolishing its manufacture and sale by the government, and the third, a much more sweeping measure, extending the prohibition to every form of alcoholic drink throughout the Empire under martial law, the cities, as well as the country being included. According to press reports, on November 14, thousands of men, women and children stood in a driving snow storm before the doors of the liquor shops awaiting their turn on that, the last day in which it was possible to purchase even light wine or beer under the prohibition act of the government. The effect of this marvelous revolution, among other influences for betterment, on the Russian soldiery in the present war constitutes one of the miracles of history. The *London Times* might well be moved to say: "The great victory over drunkenness in Russia has received far too little attention in other countries. Since China proscribed opium the world has seen nothing like it. We have been well reminded that in sternly prohibiting the sale of spirituous liquor Russia has already vanquished a greater foe than the Germans." It is not surprising that it has moved a member of the British Parliament, William Henry Cowan, Liberal, to propose that Great Britain follow Russia's example and prohibit the sale of liquor during the war at least.

On conditions in Great Britain, The Baptist Times and Freeman of London, says: "Our public houses need looking after. We want to stop this terrific leak through which so much wage and life runs to waste. Testimonies by laymen, not professional Temperance advocates, may

go some way to induce licensing justices to use the fresh powers they have. If we do not get these used now, we may wait forever. If we delay or hesitate 'the Trade' will entrench itself in the new position." It justly scores the way the Mother Country welcomed the coming of the Canadians to her aid in this war: "They came with hearts flaming with enthusiasm for the Empire, and we welcomed them with torrents of beer and spirits. The scenes at the stations, in the troop trains and round the recruiting offices were bad enough, but everything else we have seen and heard of sinks into insignificance compared with what took place on the arrival of the Canadians. One of them, we learn, actually died of alcoholism." Again it says: "We talk about the drunkenness of German soldiers in France and Belgium, forgetting that there is some excuse for such excess when men have been marching for hours in burning heat without being able to get anything to drink. Then we should remember that in Germany the public houses are all closed and the churches all open, and that the people are not allowed to sell or give alcoholic liquors to the soldiers. We should do well to imitate their example and make it a criminal offense to 'treat' soldiers and sailors." It says further: "We are the only one of the great nations now engaged in the war which is allowing its soldiers and sailors to be brutalized by drink. While Germany has closed its public houses, France has prohibited the sale of absinthe and the nation no longer issues a drink ration to its soldiers, we are so under the heel of the drink trade that we content ourselves with closing our public houses an hour or two earlier and make little or no effort to save our men and their wives from the terrible temptations of drink and its attendant evils. It would pay us abundantly to imitate the example of the Tzar and sacrifice all the revenue we derive from the sale of intoxicants. Legislation is useful and Lord Kitchener's appeal will surely meet with a wide response, but if all our officers in army and navy would declare that they would forego the

use of intoxicants during the war, we should quickly have a tee-total army. It is personal example that counts for most." But it is somewhat reassuring to find the *London Times* representing the British soldier at the front as "marching through the best vineyards in existence and temperately taking, as many letters tell us, only his cup of tea." It even goes so far as to say that for the Allies, and for the first time in history, this is to all intents and purposes a tee-total war! "The fight sternly waged by them against intemperance may well symbolize the other victory which must eventually be theirs. Certainly troops who march obeying the Tzar's ukase against drink or who carry in their knapsacks or pockets Lord Kitchener's admonition to abjure wine, have an immense moral advantage over those whose officers set their men the example of vinous excesses."

Lord Roberts in his last days made this appeal to the public to cease tempting soldiers with liquors: "I feel it is my duty to point out to the civil population that putting temptation in the way of our soldiers by treating them to drink is injurious and prejudicial to our chances of victory." Lord Kitchener, after many protests against treating his soldiers, in his appeal to the new army to prepare themselves for active service, said: "This result can only be achieved if by hard work and strict sobriety you keep yourselves thoroughly fit and healthy."

Sir James Crichton-Browne, the famous physician, in an interview on "Alcohol and the War," said:

"Tea has been one of the saviors of mankind. I verily believe that but for the introduction of tea and coffee, Europe might have drunk itself to death."

Says the Associated Press in a recent report:

"Every day the demand in London for a stricter regulation of the sale of liquors during the war becomes more insistent. Military authorities are disgusted with the drunkenness of the soldiers, brought about by the disposition of the civilians to treat all men in uniform.

The Duchess of Marlborough, Lady Byles, Mrs. McKenna, Mrs. James Gow and many other prominent women composed a delegation which recently visited Mr. McKenna at the Home Office and asked his assistance in battling with the wave of alcoholism among women. Lady Byles, who presented the delegation, explained that the women represented different opinions socially and politically, but they were unanimous in their opinion that the Government should take immediate steps to check drinking among women. They furthermore believe that any regulation undertaken by the Government should extend to men as well as women. Mr. McKenna replied that it would require a new act from Parliament to enable him to curtail the hours of liquor selling further. He promised to submit the suggestion to the House."

Certainly the Anti-Alcohol Movement has good backing in that remarkable poster signed by many of England's foremost medical authorities and circulated widely throughout the country at the opening of the war, headed "Effects of Alcohol on Naval and Military Work." It was addressed "To All Men Serving the Empire:"—"It has been proved by the most careful scientific experiments and completely confirmed by rational experience in athletics and war, as attested by Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Lord Wolsley and many other army leaders, that Alcohol or drink,

- (1) Slows the power to see signals,
- (2) Confuses prompt judgment,
- (3) Spoils accurate shooting,
- (4) Hastens fatigue,
- (5) Lessens resistance to disease and exposure, and
- (6) Increases shock from wounds.

We, therefore, most strongly urge you for your own health and efficiency that at least as long as the war lasts you should become

TOTAL ABSTAINERS.”

“(Signed)

Thomas Barlow, Pres. Coll. Phys. Physician to  
H. M. the King.

Frederick Trevers, Sergeant-Surgeon to H. M. the  
King.

G. J. H. Evatt, Surgeon-General R. A. M. C.

Victor Horsley, Captain R. A. M. C. T. F.

G. Sims Woodhead, M. D., Lt. Col. R. A. M. C.  
T. F.”

In fairness to the Germans it may not be amiss to add further the remarkable testimony of Professor Thomas C. Hall, of Union Theological Seminary, Roosevelt Professor of University of Berlin for 1915-16, as to the manner in which Germany acted and the German troops went forth at the beginning of the war, though the Outlook suggests that “it can hardly be regarded as judicial.”

“Of Germany’s military strength no one had any doubt, but her moral strength has been a revelation. With the first proclamation of war all drinking was stopped at once. I have seen, not hundreds only, but thousands of soldiers pass, but never an oath or a drunken word have I heard. Grim humor marked the passing of the never-ending stream, but there was no levity. There was much singing, much quiet praying, and often a very solemn hush, as all the terrible issues of such a struggle for the Fatherland and the highest values came home.”

It is enough to say in conclusion, that if there may come out of the conflict and desolation of this terrible war a deeper, truer and more world-wide realization of the ravages of the drink evil and of the relation of abstinence to efficiency and success, in spite of its tragic costliness, it will not have been in vain; for the truth learned in its fulness in the harsh necessity of war will not be likely to be wholly forgotten in times of peace.