

plans. When he wants "pleasure," he calculates that he can spare just half an hour for it. He has to pour the strongest liquors down his throat at the greatest possible rate.

Now imagine this man—or this woman—slightly hampered; the time available slightly curtailed. He can no longer waste ten minutes in obtaining "pleasure"; or he dare not drink openly on account of other people. Well, his remedy is simple; he can get immediate action out of cocaine. There is no smell; he can be as secret as any elder of the church can wish.

The mischief of civilization is the intensive life, which demands intensive stimulation. Human nature requires pleasure; wholesome pleasures require leisure; we must choose between intoxication and the sista. There are no cocaine fiends in Logroño.

Moreover, in the absence of a Climate, life demands a Conversation; we must choose between intoxication and cultivation of the mind. There are no drug-fiends among people who are primarily pre-occupied with science and philosophy, art and literature.

VI.

However, let us concede the prohibitionist claims. Let us admit the police contention that cocaine and the rest are used by criminals who would otherwise lack the nerve to operate; they also contend that the effects of the drugs are so deadly that the cleverest thieves quickly become inefficient. Then for Heaven's sake establish depots where they can get free cocaine!

You cannot cure a drug fiend; you cannot make him a useful citizen. He never was a good citizen, or he would not have fallen into slavery. If you reform him temporarily, at vast expense, risk, and trouble, your whole work vanishes like morning mist when he meets his next temptation. The proper remedy is to let him gang his ain gait to the de'il. Instead of less drug, give him more drug, and be done with him. His fate will be a warning to his neighbors, and in a year or two people will have the sense to shun the danger. Those who have not, let them die, too, and save the state. Moral weaklings are a danger to society, in whatever line their failings lie. If they are so amiable as to kill themselves, it is a crime to interfere.

You say that while these people are killing themselves they will do mischief. Maybe; but they are doing it now.

Prohibition has created an underground traffic, as it always does; and the evils of this are immeasurable. Thousands of citizens are in league to defeat the law; are actually bribed by the law itself to do so, since the profits of the illicit trade become enormous, and the closer the prohibition, the more unreasonably big they are. You can stamp out the use of silk handkerchiefs in this way: people say, "All right; we'll use linen." But the "cocaine fiend" wants cocaine; and you can't put him off with Epsom salts. Moreover, his mind has lost all proportion; he will pay anything for his drug; he will never say, "I can't afford it"; and if the price be high, he will steal, rob, murder to get it. Again I say: you cannot reform a drug fiend; all you do by preventing them from obtaining it is to create a class of subtle and dangerous criminals; and even when you have jailed them all, is any one any the better?

While such large profits (from one thousand to two thousand per cent.) are to be made by secret

dealers, it is to the interest of those dealers to make new victims. And the profits at present are such that it would be worth my while to go to London and back first class to smuggle no more cocaine than I could hide in the lining of my overcoat! All expenses paid, and a handsome sum in the bank at the end of the trip! And for all the law, and the spies, and the rest of it, I could sell my stuff with very little risk in a single night in the Tenderloin.

Another point is this. Prohibition cannot be carried to its extreme. It is impossible, ultimately, to withhold drugs from doctors. Now doctors, more than any other single class, are drug fiends; and also, there are many who will traffic in drugs for the sake of money or power. If you possess a supply of the drug, you are the master, body and soul, of any person who needs it.

People do not understand that a drug, to its slave, is more valuable than gold or diamonds; a virtuous woman may be above rubies, but medical experience tells us that there is no virtuous woman in need of the drug who would not prostitute herself to a rag-picker for a single sniff.

And if it be really the case that one-fifth of the population takes some drug, then this long little, wrong little island is in for some very lively times.

The absurdity of the prohibitionist contention is shown by the experience of London and other European cities. In London any householder or apparently responsible person can buy any drug as easily as if it were cheese; and London is not full of raving maniacs, snuffing cocaine at every street corner, in the intervals of burglary, rape, arson, murder, malfeasance in office, and misprision of treason, as we are assured must be the case if a free people are kindly allowed to exercise a little freedom.

Or, if the prohibitionist contention be not absurd, it is a comment upon the moral level of the people of the United States which would have been righteously resented by the Gadarene swine after the devils had entered into them.

I am not here concerned to protest on their behalf; allowing the justice of the remark, I still say that prohibition is no cure. The cure is to give the people something to think about; to develop their minds; to fill them with ambitions beyond dollars; to set up a standard of achievement which is to be measured in terms of eternal realities; in a word, to educate them.

If this appear impossible, well and good; it is only another argument for encouraging them to take cocaine.

IN THE RED ROOM OF ROSE CROIX.

The bleeding gate of God unveils its rose;
The cavernous West swallows the dragon Sun;
Earth's darkness broods on dissolution,
A mother-vulture, nested on Repose.
Ah then! what grace within our girdle glows,
What crimson web of will-work, wizard-spun
To garb thy glee-gilt heart, Hilarion,
An Alpenbluehn on our star-crested snows!

O scarlet flower, smear honey on the thigh
Of this thy bee, that sucks thy sweetness dry!
O bower of sunset, bring me to thy sleep
Wherein move dreams stained purple with perfumes,
Whose birds of paradise, on Punic plumes,
Declare dooms undecipherably deep!