

PHYSICIANS AND PROHIBITION

Learned Essay On the Relations of One to the Other.

ALCOHOL A REMEDIAL NECESSITY

Dr. Mansfeld, of Ashland, Puts Himself Squarely On Record as Opposed to Prohibition—His Reasons—Lincoln Jottings.

[FROM THE BEE'S LINCOLN BUREAU.]

The Lincoln medical society held an important session Tuesday evening at the offices of Dr. Lane, one feature of the evening being read by Dr. A. S. Mansfield, of Ashland, upon the topic, "The physician's relation to the liquor question." The paper was one that showed long and careful study and the perfect knowledge that the writer had of his subject. The paper dealt with a close analysis of the action of alcohol upon the human system and its medicinal uses. The doctor planted himself squarely on the ground that alcohol as a remedial agent was a necessity, and that in cases of typhus fever, pneumonia and diphtheria that its efficacy as a life saving stimulant was unquestioned. To the public questions of the day he referred to the use of alcohol, the remarks of the doctor were received with even greater attention by the society, and for physicians to take a public stand on a public question of this character seemed a new departure. In this regard the following statement was made:

"No one at all acquainted with man, his weaknesses and vices, can for a moment seriously entertain the proposition of prohibition. He knows only too well that prohibition simply means substituting one form of vice for another, and in its forms can possibly furnish, opium, chloral and hashish are some of them. It is also true that no law, however beneficial to the transgressor, which becomes a brake to the exercise of good judgment, can for a long run be of benefit to the people, it will detract their will power, and laws which cannot well be enforced—and prohibition is one of them—will add to incision, demoralization, hypocrisy and perjury. Such laws will convert the police department of the state into the authorities of aounding horns and bugles, the people into minors and babies."

Elaborate statistics supporting the statement that prohibition meant the substitution of greater evils were cited, showing the increase of opium, cocaine, morphine, etc., of which the greatest evils that resulted from the indiscriminate use of poisons drugs in countries where the religion prohibited the use of alcohol.

The doctor furnished in his paper the figures showing that of all the nations of the globe, Norway is the next alone as showing a decrease in the use of alcohol in the last fifty years. This had been accomplished through a peculiar license system peculiar to that country. The system was that the licenses for the sale of intoxicants were placed in the hands of those who were most deputed to it. The party having the license was hedged about so that he must not violate the law governing the sale. This law required the keeper of the place, where license was granted, to keep a character of strict temperance and honesty. Any person who drank only could make his profit. When alcoholic drinks were sold by him a strict account must be kept of them, and the profits turned over to the state for the maintenance of reformatory institutions. This was not prohibited, but it was required that the sale of alcoholic liquors in Sweden from forty-five quarts to the person fifty years of age to eight quarts to the person in 1887. The paper further cited that at the Vienna congress of physicians from all countries in Europe, the physicians there agitated a system of laws for the control of alcoholic drinks almost identical with the high license law now in force in Nebraska, backed by the internal revenue laws of the United States.

The concluding portion of the doctor's paper was devoted to a plan for the prevention and cure of drunkenness that he suggested and which cannot fail to be of interest to all who are studying the liquor problem.

All alcoholic beverages which contain more than 15 per cent of alcohol, such as pure alcohol, brandies, gin, whisky, rum, sherry, port, etc., should not be sold in saloons, because they are surely injurious to the human body; that all poisons and should be included in the restrictions governing the sale of poisons.

"All beverages containing less than 15 per cent of alcohol should be sold by licensed druggists upon the prescriptions of registered physicians only. Such prescriptions must not be in quantity large enough to produce intoxication, and should not be dispensed in saloons or drugstores, infractions to be punished by loss of license by both druggist and physician.

The present high license law of Nebraska, with the above modifications, would meet all the requirements of a proper restriction.

All business transactions under the influence of liquor should by law be void, just as contracts made on Sunday or with minors or imbeciles.

"Besides temperance and total abstinence societies, temperance unions should be formed which will carry on the Gethsemane system of Sweden and Norway."

In regard to persons who are imbeciles two points should be observed—first, that they are not criminals, but very sick people who are approaching insanity, and the perpetuity of the government as non-producers and public burdens. Such persons should be subject to commitment to institutions created for their care in the same manner as insane asylums. In confirmed cases the commitment should be for a term of years, and when lost in the court committing or in the managers of the reformatory to grant tickets of leave, continuance dependent upon good behavior, these reformatories to be through the legislature, supporting as possible the same.

Doctor Mansfield closed his paper with the hope that some of the suggestions might go toward the solution of the problem of drunkenness and its cure, and expressed a wish that the medical community might become more zealous in the work which would bring public sentiment to a point which would answer to the prayer, "Lord, that I might be healed."

OLD SOLDIERS TO THE REAR.

The same suggestion has been made that the laying of the cornerstone to the new Grant Memorial hall on the university grounds is to be conducted by the masons, and the grand army men of the city and state, if they take any part at all in the exercises, is to be a secondary one.

This Grant Memorial hall is to be built from appropriation made by the last legislature. It is a state institution and forms one of the State university buildings in which will be the armory of the university cadets, who in military affairs are under the instructions of a detailed officer from the regular army. The hall is named the Grant Memorial hall after the country's greatest military hero, and everything points to the appropriateness of having the laying of the cornerstone done by the Grand Army.

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