

Prohibition-Shock Seen as Neurosis

Psychiatry

"Don't" Attitude Prevents Sane and Temperate Living

By Dr. Stewart Paton

EVERY human being is a remarkable combination of sane, insane and criminal tendencies. One of the most important questions that confronts the American people today is:

What shall we do to take a constructive interest in stimulating sane impulses, and in diverting energy that might be expended in intemperate, insane and criminal tendencies into constructive and creative channels?

It is a very difficult problem that we have before us to try to answer these questions about how to handle the human machine so that it may be used for constructive purposes. These problems are very important. We are trying to regulate the activities of such a complicated and delicately balanced machine that we should try to secure good advice on the subject and secure assistance from people whose business it is to study the activities of human beings.

When the Government needs advice about the establishment and maintenance of power plants it asks the opinion of experts who have had experience in building and operating power plants. I am sure that no reasonable person has any objection to offer about the Government's method of procedure when it asks for advice from experts about plans for using the water power of the country to generate electricity.

Unfortunately when the Government decided to take an active part in directing the streams of human energy so that these should be used for temperate, sane and constructive purposes it did not ask the experts who are accustomed to study the flow of instincts and emotions that drive the human machine. It asked the opinion of people who are successful in manufacturing automobiles, in developing industrial organizations, in organizing and running railroads, banks and various commercial enterprises.

This decision not to ask the advice of people whose business it was to know something about the complicated human machine has resulted in such a serious mistake that the resulting conditions have become a serious menace to "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

The Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution is a serious menace to temperance and sanity. This amendment to the Constitution expresses the

Dr. Paton's recent testimony before a congressional committee on the problem of prohibition presented the interesting viewpoint of a psychiatrist. Although not everyone will agree with his reasoning and conclusions, his thesis is considered worth presentation, as that of a man who sees social problems with eyes accustomed to watching the effects of self-imposed prohibitions on the individual. Recognized as a leader in his field of research, Dr. Paton is lecturer in psychiatry of Johns Hopkins University and is a trustee of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

emotional and mental attitude toward life and its problems that is characteristic not of the people whom we recognize as temperate and sane but of the unfortunates popularly described as insane and criminal.

One of the chief characteristics of people we call insane and criminal is that they think of life largely in terms of prohibitions.

One of the distinguishing features of a sane person is that he has a reasonable amount of confidence in his ability to follow a sane, constructive course of action whenever he is confronted by a difficult or embarrassing situation. When the insane or criminal is confronted by a difficult situation he begins to think of the things that he should not or must not do. The attention is focussed largely on the prohibiting complex, and the result is that the drive of the impulse to do what is insane or criminal is intensified. The hysterical interest taken in the subject of getting rid of alcohol as a beverage has had the effect of increasing the intensity and duration of the desire of a great many Americans to drink. It has changed temperate into intemperate desires to drink. If a special amendment had been added to the Constitution forbidding people to be fanatical or to steal, it would have stimulated even a greater interest in fanaticism and in stealing than is exhibited today.

Fortunately the people in the country who are entrusted with the education of young people have not adopted the same attitude toward their pupils that the American Government has adopted toward its citizens. The Government has told the world that it has not any confidence in the ability of the American citizen to lead a sane and temperate life. If the school teachers of the country exhibited a similar de-

gree of distrust in their pupils' ability and wish to be temperate and sane the results would be disastrous. The two great tragedies of the present century have been, first the World War, and second, the confession of the American Government that the citizens of this country are predisposed to be intemperate, insane and criminal. Autocratic Prussia, Soviet Russia and so-called Democratic America have put their faith in prohibitions and in armed intervention to force people to obey and have respect for unreasonable laws.

One of the most deplorable results of prohibition is that it has diverted our attention from the study of the underlying causes of intemperance, insanity and criminality. In the fanatical attempts that have been made to enforce prohibition, the worm temperance has almost been forgotten. The prohibitive attitude of mind has closed our eyes to the fact that intemperance and insanity in many cases are the result of our unpreparedness as a people to enjoy leisure and upon our frantic breakneck efforts to violate the speed laws that should govern the rate at which the human machine is driven.

After the War this country had a marvelous opportunity to show the world how to live temperately and sanely. Instead of doing this it decided to embark on an intemperate and insane campaign to misdirect human energy. If the Government had been intelligently interested in directing human activities it would have recognized immediately how little we really know about this extraordinarily complex and delicately balanced human machine. Then if the campaign to direct human energy had been wisely planned efforts would have been made at once to remedy this condition. Experts would probably have been sent to Europe to study what has been accomplished there to give us more information about what is being done to get some clearer notions than we have today about the strange complex of sane, insane and criminal tendencies that we call human nature. In Berlin and Munich as well as in other foreign cities institutes have been established for the express purpose of encouraging investigators to study human beings.

In 1798 in France the great French physician, Doctor Pinel, ordered the chains to be re- (*Turn to page 172*)

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- WMAQ** CHICAGO, ILL.; Chicago Daily News; 670 kc., 5000 watts. Thursday, 11:33 a. m.
- WSM** NASHVILLE, TENN.; National Life and Accident Insurance Co.; 650 kc., 5000 watts. Wednesday, 5:45 to 6:00 p. m.
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SCIENCE SERVICE
Washington, D. C.

Canadian Sulfur

Canada would like to stop buying \$3,000,000 of sulfur in the United States every year.

An experimental plant for extracting sulfur from the mineral, iron pyrite, has begun operation in the hope of producing sulfur at a cheaper price than the import cost, Horace Freeman, chemical engineer of Shawinigan, Quebec, told the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.

Canada must have sulfur to make the sulfite liquor used in her vast paper industries and to make sulfuric acid. Because the price of paper has dropped and the price of sulfur has risen, there is a demand for home produced sulfur.

Most of America's sulfur is now mined in Louisiana and Texas in a practically pure state. Combined with iron, as the sulfide of pyrite, it is found in large quantities very near Canadian paper mills, but in the past there has been no satisfactory method of extracting it.

Chemistry

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New Neurosis—Cont'd

moved from the patients in the old hospital, Salpêtrière. This practically marked the beginning of the modern humane treatment of the insane. This was not, however, Pinel's greatest contribution to society. His greatest contribution was in telling the world that he was interested in the unfortunate insane not only in order to help to improve the conditions in which they were living but also to derive from the study of insanity information that would lead to a more intelligent understanding of human nature.

If the people who were responsible for the formulation and enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment had been familiar with Pinel's views and had known a little more about the condition we describe as insanity they would not have advised American citizens to adopt an emotional and mental attitude toward life that is characteristic of the insane and not the sane.

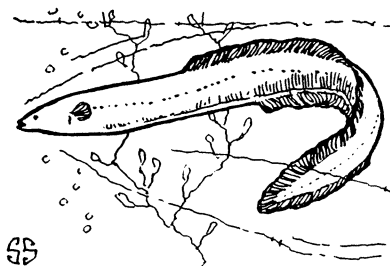
The emotional and mental disorders that were collectively described as shell shock in the World War threatened at one time to interfere seriously with the fighting efficiency of armies.

In time of peace emotional and mental disorders that may be described as "prohibition-shock" interfere with the attempts we make to adjust our lives on a temperate, sane, and reasonable basis.

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NATURE RAMBLINGS

By Frank Thone



"Irish Snakes"

"'Praties an' fishes are very good dishes

For Patrick's Day in the mornin'!"

So runs the rime that goes with the only Irish jig tune that most of us know. It is a good, lively tune, and there are other—and better—words for it; but the education of a lot of us has been sadly neglected in such matters.

And if fishes, why not eels? The good saint whose memory we shall celebrate next Monday of whatever race we be, is reputed to have driven the snakes out of Ireland, but fortunately he spared the island its eels. The slow rivers of Ireland have their good share of this toothsome though snaky-looking fish, and pronging for eels has had its practitioners there even before the days of St. Patrick.

Eels are among the strangest of fish in habits and life-history as well as in outward form. They are migratory fish, like salmon; but unlike salmon they descend to the sea to breed and ascend the rivers to live out their lives. Mature eels go down to the sea in vast numbers. All the eels from western Europe congregate in the southern part of the North Atlantic, produce their eggs, and die. The young eels—elvers, they are called—find their way back home without guides, and re-stock the waters. Our own North American eels make a similar migration, their breeding ground being somewhat to the north of that of their European brethren.

It is rather a pity that we Americans have not cultivated more of a taste for eel, for it is really very good eating. Our cousins "in the Old Country" appreciate it better. In some parts of Europe smoked eel is in high favor, and anybody who has ever tried it will tell you that smoked eel is just about all that could be desired in the way of *hors d'oeuvres*.

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