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In An Observation Plane

WHEN we see so many of the weak still pursuing the zigzag path of inebriety along our pavements it shocks us who favored prohibition because we believed it would help those very men.

Many among us who had no particular enthusiasm for perpetual teetotalism and yet were as keen to the devastations of "Demon Rum" as the driest of our neighbors voted for the "bone dry" proposition because we wanted the frailest to have the benefit of its uplift.

They tell us that "Demon Rum" is still a resident of the downtown district and has regular places of business in the very heart of that district. We disclaim any knowledge upon the subject except that which we have obtained by watching the zigzag course of many of our old friends. Knowing their habits, we are persuaded that they have not gone into remote regions to "light up." What signs and passwords may be necessary to summon "Demon Rum" to his guarded doors we do not pretend to know, but we see sure signs that every day he is transacting business—a business far more deleterious than any in which he was engaged when whisky was legal and often pure.

What horrible stuff of delirium is this which "Demon Rum" doles out at prices which wreck the pocketbooks of the frail much more quickly than did the prices in the days of legal wetness? Families are ruined today more quickly by the bootlegger than ever they were by the keeper of the dramshop. So, too, are bodies and minds.

I have no wish to state the case too broadly. It may be true that the bootlegger deals only with hundreds while the saloonkeeper trafficked with thousands. It is probable that more of that frail class we have been describing dealt with the saloonkeeper than now deal with the bootlegger.

Admitting that many have been rescued by the dry law, that thousands of homes have been made happier by husbands and fathers restored to health and mental vigor, is it not shocking that even the most rigid of bone dry laws falls so far short of its object?

We begin to see that the "devil's advocates" of "Demon Rum" were not wholly amiss when they said that human beings could not be made virtuous by law. Of course, they generalized too sweepingly as men are wont to do when they are anxious to per-

suade rather than convince. But there was much of truth in what they said. "Bone dry" laws do not change human nature. At best they simply help some of the weak, while placing burdens on the strong.

The writer is not arguing for the old conditions. He is merely voicing the surprise and regret of many that even the strictest laws are failures when they collide with human nature.

Utah's bone dry law placed a heavy handicap on those who needed alcohol for medical purposes. So difficult did the law make the purchase of alcohol even for such purposes that perfectly respectable citizens have been known to deal directly or indirectly with the bootleggers in cases of desperate need. In a word, bootleggers have saved lives that the perfectly virtuous and fanatical would have destroyed.

I hear that our wise solons are planning a change in the law which will permit a decent traffic in alcohol for medical purposes. I have no plan to suggest, for I have not studied that phase of the case with a legislator's eye, but I am glad to hear that some of the restrictions may be raised.

Those who are the most zealous supporters of bone dryness are the first to denounce the authorities when prohibition laws go wrong. And that is quite logical. Believing in the swift perfectability of human nature with the aid of law they argue that it must be some weakness of law enforcement that causes human nature to continue in its ways of error and frailty.

How far the police of Salt Lake City are to blame for the prevalence of bad whisky and terrifying inebriety I am at a loss to reckon. Perhaps a way may be found to probe the problem. The legislature might appoint a committee of investigation to ascertain the responsibility of the various officials and possessors of authority who are charged with the duty of keeping Utah sober.

THE devotees of prohibition assure us that bootlegging is a temporary phenomenon. They contend most reasonably that the supplies of liquor are running out and that with universal prohibition in effect, with the manufacture of alcoholic beverages stopped and severe restrictions on the disposal of other forms of alcohol the time must soon come when drunkenness will be as rare as a medieval costume on the streets of an American city.

National prohibition is certain and

will have the effect of damming up one of the most copious sources of alcoholic supply—interstate traffic. In a word, all signs point to the final exit of "Demon Rum."

Is it likely that, in the years to come, the persistent demon will play a return engagement? Is it possible that a generation wholly without knowledge of the spirits that drove their fathers mad will revive the liquor traffic? Mere curiosity without appetite might be sufficient to restore the demon to his throne, but the absence of a beverage alcohol will bar the way to a revival of an indoor sport which has been popular since grapes first were crushed in Eden.

I suppose it will be great sport for the succeeding generations to read the literature of drunkenness, to mark the queer capers cut by their forebears. And, no doubt, they will quiver with horror and emotion when they read such plays as "Ten Nights in a Barroom," wondering what was this strange elixir of lunacy that could transform men into beasts and cause women days and nights of woe and gread.

And some of the old codgers who have come down from our own times will slyly wink at one another, huddle together about the fireplace and tell of the high old times they had when Bourbon was king. And being of the hardy race of heroes who battled with booze and won they will be apt to agree that "Demon Rum" was not as dangerous as their grandchildren have been deluded into imagining. Perhaps they will even felicitate one another that they have "something on" the younger generation and will brag, as men are wont to do even now, about especially notable sprees that drew them into perils vast or sports grotesque.

GAMBLING, too, has been driven into the secret places, but does not hide as deep as "Demon Rum." It sometimes flaunts itself boldly in clubs where fortunes are won and lost in a few hours. And sometimes the basements or the inner rooms of hotels offer sufficient seclusion, but often the veil is drawn a little more carefully.

I am reminded of a gambling story I heard the other day.

Scene—one of our centrally located hotels a few years ago. Dramatis personae—card sharks posing as ordinary players and one victim, an army officer from Fort Douglas.

Having lost all his available funds in a few hours he consulted an old friend at the post, one who was supposed to know some of the intimate mysteries of crookedness at cards, although himself the soul of honor. After listening to his friend's story the second officer said:

"Very simple. You were cold-decked."

Here is the story the first officer told:

"I was allowed to win until the very last hand. Then I was dealt three aces. When I drew two cards I was highly elated to discover that I had four aces. I figured I could

not lose and went the limit. When the showdown came the man at my left, who had drawn but one card, had a straight flush. I was cleaned, having lost \$600."

The second officer said quietly:

"I think I can get your money back for you. Where is the game?"

The hotel was named and Mr. Second Officer sat in at the game the following night, his opponents being the sharks who had fleeced his friend. He expected, of course, that the same trick of cold-decking would be tried and he was not disappointed. When he was dealt three aces he did just as his friend had done with one slight difference. Instead of drawing two cards he drew three and threw away one of his aces. He figured that this would break the prearranged schedule and that the man at his left would not have much of a hand, whereas he would have at least three aces. He had reasoned aright and when he rose from the table with a pleasant "good night, gentlemen," he was \$2,500 ahead. Returning to Fort Douglas, he gave his friend \$600, despite protests.

"I owe it to you, for telling where to make an easy winning," he said.

CHOICE

By Angela Morgan.

I'd rather have the thought of you
To hold against my heart,
My spirit to be taught of you
With west winds blowing,
Than all the warm caresses
Of another love's bestowing,
Or all the glories of the world
In which you had no part.

I'd rather have the theme of you
To thread my nights and days,
I'd rather have the dream of you
With faint stars glowing,
I'd rather have the want of you,
The rich, elusive taunt of you
Forever and forever and forever unconfest
Than claim the alien comfort
Of any other's breast.

O lover! O my lover,
That this should come to me!
I'd rather have the hope for you,
Ah, Love, I'd rather grope for you
Within the great abyss
Than claim another's kiss—
Alone I'd rather go my way
Throughout eternity.

AS promoters of insomnia Salt Lake's flat-wheel street cars can not be excelled. In the days of torture, when amiable gentlemen disagreed and stretched one another on racks or curiously carved one another's flesh with meat hooks, prizes would have been offered for such an excruciating instrument of cruelty as a flat-wheel trolley car.

It is a long time between cars when one waits on the corner, but when one tries to conquer insomnia cars seemed to be hurled at one's head several times a minute and the track seems to be ripping up and following the car.

I trust that I am not disturbing the sleep of the general manager by say-