

## DRINK AND THE SLUM.

The following extracts are from "Stand Up, Ye Dead," a book written by Norman Maclean, and published in 1917:—

We drove people into the congested and foul tenements of narrow streets. Let the well-to-do classes try to realise the conditions of life to which men such as this have been doomed. Let them picture to themselves what life can be like in a one-roomed or two-roomed house in a crowded barracks. Imagine a man and wife, with an infant and two or more children, and often a lodger, living in such a house. For them there is no change of air either day or night; their bodies cannot be cleaned, nor their clothes washed; they are denied cleanliness in their whole environment; it is impossible to cook appetising food or to serve it in a pleasing manner; there is no escape for them from noise and squalor; they have no privacy either living or dying; and there is always the spectre of want hovering near. What recompense has the State provided for them in their misery? What provision has been made that men and women may escape for a little to breathe a purer air and feel that they have part in a life richer than this? The State has not been wholly unmindful of them. It has provided for them the public-house, and, with paternal care, has multiplied these places of recreation and happiness, where the mass of human misery is greatest. The State has been lavish in its provision. In the Cowgate of Edinburgh it has provided one public-house for every 200 of the population, though in the leisured and rich districts there is only one license for every 1300 of the population; in the Cowcaddens of Glasgow it has provided at the rate of thirty public-houses to the half-mile. It surrounds the poor and the miserable with an atmosphere reeking with alcohol. The trade in alcohol enfeebles the will, saps the resisting power, and then trades upon that enfeebled will. This is the door of escape from misery which the State provides. Who can blame the people for availing themselves of this national remedy for their woe pressed upon them by the State at every corner? If the drunkenness of masses of the population be a national weakness and a crying scandal, it is not their fault. It is the State that is responsible, and as citizens of the State we have each to bear our

share of the responsibility and of the shame. It is no use decrying publicans and brewers, for these are only what we ourselves made them. Let us take ourselves to task and condemn our own folly and our own sin."

"When we consider the results of the trade in alcohol, the wonder grows how it is that this State-regulated monopoly for the manufacture of paupers, lunatics and criminals has been suffered to continue so long. To it most of the evils which afflict the body-politic can be traced. It nullifies all efforts at social improvement. Philanthropic movements have poured out money like water to improve the condition of the people, but faster than slums can be cleared away or emptied, new slums are created and filled by the victims of alcohol. The funds of Guardians and of Parish Councils are mainly used to support those whom alcohol has impoverished. There is the authority of Mr John Burns, the late President of the Local Government Board, for the statement that out of 100,000 applicants for poor relief at Wandsworth during a period of twenty years, only twelve were abstainers. . . . It not only fills our workhouses, it also crowds our gaols. According to the late Lord Alverstone, nine-tenths of the crime of this country was due to drink. . . . Insanity finds in it a fruitful source. Twenty per cent. of all the men and ten per cent. of all the women in a London County Council asylum—the Claybury Asylum—have become insane through alcohol. . . . The social evil is mainly due to alcohol. Under its influence women descend to vice. Half the infections of the social disease are traceable to the weakening of the will power by drink. . . . Evil though it be in itself, its evil goes far beyond itself, for it is the short cut to all other vices. . . . It is one of the great causes of the decline of the race in thus polluting the springs of life, poisoning and sterilising them; but, far more, it is responsible for an enormous share of the appalling infant mortality which destroys in many districts a fifth of the child life in the first year. . . . It lowers the vitality and makes the tissues more susceptible to attacks by the germs of disease, and thus greatly increases the death rate. . . . It multiplies coffins and empties cradles. . . . Were this one monopoly abolished and the people delivered from the State-licensed temptations which are for ever inviting them

to their ruin, almost all workhouses and gaols would be closed and the nation delivered from the burden of pauperism and crime, which weighs so heavily upon it. Yet the nation in the time of its greatest peril spends £180,600,000 a year upon the drink traffic. This is the price which it pays for the lowering of its own vitality and for the weakening of its striking power. A Government which connives at that cannot be a Government that is waging war really in earnest. Shipping, food, coals, the railways, roads, and a host of men are in a great measure sacrificed to a trade which weakens the nation in the face of the enemy.

## CHEMISTRY AND MORALS.

Is there any relation between these two subjects? Julius Stieglitz, professor of chemistry in the University of Chicago, says there is. His words are, "Speaking as a chemist, not as a moralist, I cannot avoid the opinion that American society would be immensely benefited if prohibition were strictly enforced. There is definite relation between chemistry and morals, and alcohol produces an attitude toward life which society cannot afford to foster. It causes crime. It inflames passion. It unseats reason. The complete removal of alcohol I am convinced, will change human nature for the better. My observations as a chemist compel me to reach this conclusion."

## HAVE PATIENCE.

Moonshine is plenty, no doubt;  
Yes, you can get it, that's true.  
Just seek a bootlegger out,  
He'll sell his poison to you.  
Still, booze is passing away,  
Though there is many a leak,  
Rum wasn't built in a day,  
Rum can't be smashed in a week.  
Hooch has held man in its thrall.  
Age after age it appears;  
We can't get rid of it all  
Just in couple of years—  
There's bound to be some delay  
Getting the dryness we seek.  
Rum wasn't built in a day,  
Rum can't be smashed in a week.  
—"Borton Brall."