

Beer Fiction and Beer Facts

One of the important agencies that is aiding to build up an intelligent public sentiment in this country in regard to the use of alcoholic drinks is the Scientific Temperance Federation of Boston. A leaflet recently issued by that society recalls the words of a speaker in the Annual Convention of the United States Brewers' Association in Atlantic City in June, 1907. He said:

"By an educational campaign in enlightening the masses in regard to the nature of our product, the people would soon be ripe for a law to consider beer a food and a necessity for the good and health of the public, and not subject to taxation."

Attention is called to the fact that this "campaign" is now well under way. Nearly every large newspaper and many small ones and many of the magazines contain flaring advertisements claiming healthfulness, medicinal properties and food value for beer and other alcoholic beverages. Even magazine literature is being invaded with stories subtly planned to throw discredit upon those who raise the voice of warning against the dangers of strong drink.

It is a titanic struggle between Truth and Error, with Human Destiny at stake. We give below some of the Fiction together with its correlated Fact, as set forth in this very valuable leaflet.

Fiction and Fact

Fiction:

In countries where most beer is consumed, intemperance is rarest.

Fact:

Belgium has the largest per capita consumption of beer of any country of Europe. In 1897 the Prime Minister, M. LeJeune, said publicly: "With us in Belgium alcohol produces frightful ravages." England ranks second in the consumption of beer, and her drunkenness is so threatening that 15,000 physicians petitioned to have school children taught the dangers of alcoholic drinks. Germany stands third in per capita consumption of beer. A member of the German Reichstag said recently that there are 11,000 persons in the hospitals of Germany suffering from delirium tremens. In 1897, over 14,000 persons were sentenced by the courts to institutional treatment for alcoholism.

Fiction:

Beer aids digestion: it helps the stomach do its work.

Fact:

Prof. Chittenden of Yale found that beer and other malted beverages retarded stomach digestion more than the other liquors. Dr. Chase of Tufts College Medical School also reported that stomach digestion was delayed in a marked degree by beer.

Fiction:

Beer builds up nerve tissue.

Fact:

Dr. W. H. Riley, of the Colorado Sanitarium, says: "It has been well known to physicians and scientific men for a number of years that the use of alcohol, even in moderate quantities, when long continued, produces various diseases of the nervous system, such as paralysis, insanity, apoplexy. In hundreds and even thousands of cases of those who have been addicted to the use of this poison for any considerable time, severe and distinct organic changes have also been found by post mortem examinations in the brain and other parts of the nervous system.

Fiction:

Beer is a tonic for pale, sickly people.

Fact:

Dr. Brunon of Rouen, presented to the Paris Academy

of Medicine a report containing this statement: "A child of eighteen months died of liver cirrhosis. His mother had given him two spoonfuls of beer a day since he was six months old." This is but one among many cases of "pale, sickly children" whose mothers have "strengthened" them with beer, wine or "stout" until they died of gin drinker's liver.

Fiction:

Beer strengthens and energizes the whole system.

Fact:

Dr. Bergman, a German teacher, tried the effect of a small glass of beer upon the school work of four boys 15 to 17 years of age. They all agreed that it was more difficult to think after taking the beer and they made more errors in combining and spelling. In a foot-race in Germany, a contestant who was running in second place took a drink of beer after which he fell back to fourth place. Another who thought there was no harm in taking a drink of beer on the way, fell back to twelfth place, finishing only two minutes before the expiration of the time limit. The winner was a total abstainer. These are examples of the way beer "energizes the whole system."

Fiction:

A tonic for invalids and convalescents. Highly recommended by leading physicians.

Fact:

The physicians of Dorbirn, Germany, who are entrusted with the administration of the sick-fund, have sent out a notice that hereafter it will not be dispensed to pay for alcoholic drinks. The reason given was, "The results of recent scientific investigation make it apparent that the medical employment of alcohol is not necessary. For those cases in which it has formerly been employed, pharmacy now offers medicines which are more certain, which are cheaper, and which create no tendency to misuse."

Fiction:

The 3½ per cent of alcohol in beer is simply a mild stimulant without injurious effects.

Fact:

Prof. Laitinen of Helsingfors has proved that an amount of alcohol proportionate to ½ pint of 3½ per cent beer a day for a grown man reduces ability in