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THE KEELEY CURE
FOR INEBRIETY



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THE KEELEY CURE FOR INEBRIETY.

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In a paper published some time ago in the ARENA by the eminent and scholarly author, Henry Wood, entitled "Does Bi-Chloride of Gold Cure Inebriety?" the assumption was that the gold remedies had nothing to do with the (undisputed) cures, which were brought about by some sort of psychic influence akin to hypnotism.

Two or three months later, in the pages of this magazine, Dr. Leslie E. Keeley, the originator of the treatment of inebriety and other diseases with the double chloride (not bi-chloride) of gold and sodium, presented an exhaustive paper on the scientific principles of his method of treating these diseases, and in the same number the writer of these lines set forth certain facts which had come under his own observation and out of his own experience, giving evidence that many cures of inebriety had been wrought which could be rationally accounted for in no other way than by the therapeutic action of the Keeley remedies.

It is the purpose of the present paper to give some idea of the present status of what Rev. A. B. O'Neill, C. S. C., calls in the *Catholic Review*, "A New Phase of the Drink Problem." I have had exceptional facilities for obtaining reliable information, during the two and a half years since my former "notes" appeared in these pages, and it seems to me that the readers of the ARENA, who of all Americans are interested in the uplift of humanity, when they learn what has been and is being accomplished through this agency for the permanent cure of inebriety and for the permanent reformation of drunkards, will be glad to recognize in it the mightiest factor in the solution of the problem, "What shall we do with the drunkard?" which has ever been brought to notice. Few of these readers, when they know what has been done, will be likely to withhold their favorable consideration on the grounds offered by some of the "temperance reformers," of unwillingness to "endorse a proprietary medicine." Pray why not endorse even a proprietary medicine, if it has proved itself a specific for a disease hitherto unconquerable or at least unconquered by any means known to the medical world? There is a flavor of trades-unionism in this excuse, which hints at its origin.

It is claimed by Dr. Keeley, who has the data at hand to verify his statement, that during the sixteen years since he began the treatment of inebriety as a disease, something like two hundred and fifty thousand cases have been successfully treated by his remedies and his system, of which number only about five per cent have subsequently "lapsed," or in other words have recontracted the disease. He further claims that in no single instance has there been or can there be, when the remedies are administered in accordance with his own instructions, the least physical or mental injury resulting from their use. Both claims have been disputed; but so far as I know or have seen, in no case has the dispute come from the persons most likely to be competent witnesses, viz., the patients or their families. Their testimony is invariably in line with the claims of Dr. Keeley. Even a *pseudo* investigation, like that recently attempted by Rev. Dr. Buckley, of the *Christian Advocate*, who excluded from testimony any person who had been a patient, relying altogether upon the *ex-parte* statements of physicians and clergymen who were upon the subscription list of his paper, disclosed that not less than fifty-one per cent of the acquaintances of these subscribers who had taken the genuine Keeley treatment had been permanently cured. In a very careful and painstaking investigation conducted by myself, where the inquiries were made directly of the patients themselves, I could find but twenty-three "lapses" in four hundred and eighty-eight cases. To be sure, when conducting this investigation, I was the manager of an institute, and my testimony would have been ruled out by Dr. Buckley as presumably biased. I don't know that this necessarily follows. My opportunities were certainly quite as good for learning the facts as were those of the clergymen and physicians whom alone he admitted to the witness stand.

There is, however, testimony which is not open to such suspicion. By special arrangement with the national board of managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, the Keeley treatment has been introduced into most of the "branches" of the home, as well as into a number of the state soldiers' homes. The first to make trial of the cure was the Western Branch, at or near Leavenworth, Kan., where the first patients were treated in March, 1892. The experiment has therefore been tried at that branch for more than three years. The institutes at these homes are in medical charge of physicians who, as at all other institutions throughout the country, confine themselves solely to the treatment of the Keeley patients. The "members"

of these homes are for the most part men who are enfeebled by wounds or disease; their average age is not far from sixty; few of them have any of the inducements which younger and stronger men have, of "something to look forward to"; and those who have presented themselves for the Keeley treatment have been intemperate men for from twenty to forty years.

From the official report of Col. Andrew J. Smith, governor of the Western Branch, to Gen. William B. Franklin, president of the national board of Managers, it appears that from the introduction of the treatment at the date above named, to January, 1895 (two and three-quarters years), the number of patients had been 1,227. The ratio of lapses—and there can be no doubt that the governor of the home would know of all these—had been *ten per cent*. Of the whole number treated, 724 had left the home, thus relieving the government of the expense of their support, and gone out into the world, able, now that the accursed and before-time uncontrollable appetite for drink had been removed, to maintain themselves. Of this number, 182 were married men, who had rejoined the families from which habits of inebriety had separated them! The average cost of maintaining a soldier at these homes is about the sum named by Colonel Smith for the Leavenworth Branch, \$126.22. There has therefore been saved to the government through the departure of these 724 men, the very large sum of \$93,655 *per year!*

In an institution where it is possible to know the exact truth in the case of every man, the governor's official report to a board of which President Cleveland and Secretary of War Lamont are members *ex officio*, which report has therefore the force and weight of a national document, gives the number of "lapses" as only ten per cent! Remembering who and what these men are and have been, Dr. Keeley's claim that the average of lapses throughout the country will not exceed five per cent does not seem preposterous.

That nearly two-thirds of these men have found themselves able to take up the task of self-support (and in nearly two hundred cases the support of family as well) would appear sufficient refutation of the charge sometimes made that the treatment produces physical or mental injury. But we are not without evidence which is direct and positive, and which should remove the last vestige of doubt. Again we turn to the Leavenworth Soldiers' Home. If indications of ill effects were to be found anywhere, it would surely be in the persons of men already more or less invalids.

The surgeon of this institution is in no way charged with the administration of the Keeley treatment, which, as before said, is given by physicians having this as their exclusive work. Maj. D. C. Jones is the surgeon of the Leavenworth Home, and in the following quotation from a letter dated Sept. 4, 1894, it should be remembered that he speaks from his observation and experience of the results of another physician's work; and when he says "we have treated," he means only that these cases have been treated at the home over which he has medical supervision:

We have during the past year treated five hundred and eighteen men for chronic alcoholism and opium addiction, with less than nine per cent of lapses. Out of this number we have treated one hundred younger men belonging to the U. S. A., with only four lapses. I need not say to you that *this is perhaps the most nearly a specific medicine that we have any knowledge of in the treatment of disease.*

I would further call attention to the fact that *not in a single instance in all the men treated* (since March, 1892), now numbering nearly twelve hundred, *has a man died or his physical condition been injured*, but in many cases of rheumatism, neurasthenia and other nervous affections, great improvement has been noted. The men of our branch have been greatly improved in their moral and physical condition, so much so that it is apparent in every department of the home, and especially is it so in the hospital.

Evidence of such sort, and from such a source, is simply incontestable, and needs no comment.

During the year 1894, Hon. William H. Eustis, then mayor of Minneapolis, who had given much attention to the work of the local Keeley Institute, arranged for the experimental trial of the cure upon a class of men who would perhaps be regarded as the most hopeless cases which could be selected. They were the men committed to the city workhouse for minor offences, chiefly drunkenness. Most of them were old offenders. Nearly all had been previously committed, and one man had been sentenced *twenty-seven times!* No compulsion was used. The men were given the privilege of taking the treatment if they desired to make an attempt toward better things.

As to results, the following are Mr. Eustis' own words. When asked by a reporter of the Lowell, Mass., *Mail*, "Have you any special views as to what should be done with the chronic drunkard?" he replied: "Yes; I think more of an effort should be made to effect his reformation. Do you know that I got money enough from the saloon-keepers themselves to send seventy-five habitual drunkards to the Keeley Institute? Yes, I believe in the Keeley Institutes. Of this number sent by us, fully eighty-five per cent remained permanently cured."

Let none suppose from the foregoing that the great army of 250,000 ex-patients has been recruited chiefly or even largely from the classes here spoken of. They are from every profession and occupation. Seven per cent of them have come from the medical profession; the clergy have furnished no small number; lawyers, journalists, merchants, bankers, engineers, clerks, commercial travellers, farmers, mechanics, and laborers make up the list. Prominence has been given in this paper to the results upon two classes, for these reasons: First, to indicate that the results are nothing short of wonderful where there seemed small promise or hope for permanently successful issues; second, because in these cases it has been possible to keep exact account of the results.

In the face of these undeniable facts, there can be no question that the world has seen nothing in all its efforts at temperance reform which affords so good ground for belief in the possible overthrow of the most gigantic evil of our time. One would suppose that with such a record, there could be found no professed lover of his fellowmen, least of all a professed temperance worker, who would not be glad to be reckoned the firm friend of the Keeley Cure. That it is gradually gaining recognition is undeniably true. That candid investigation of its accomplishments is certain to increase the number of its friends is equally true. But I have found a surprising number of really philanthropic people who know next to nothing about it, as shown by their confounding it with the worthless imitations which have taken advantage of its record of good. I do not know of one of the many temperance organizations which has even taken the trouble to appoint a committee to investigate and report upon it. In my reading of the reports of temperance conventions, I do not remember to have seen any consideration of inebriety as a disease, to say nothing of its possible cure. Comparatively few clergymen seem to have taken the trouble to find out what are the facts regarding it. I have come in contact with hundreds of them, and in the great majority of instances have found them but slightly informed regarding this stupendous work. I have wondered much at this; for while it is to be expected that a degree of conservatism should characterize the occupants of our pulpits, they are as a rule the staunch friends of temperance; and a method of reform which is able to show as its results a quarter of a million former drunkards who have been restored to themselves, to family, to society, to industry, and in thousands of cases to the

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church, might with reason be expected to command the serious consideration of the ministers of the gospel.

I have heard but one attempted explanation of the lack of interest in the Keeley Cure on the part of professed temperance workers, viz., that it is a business enterprise. It is that in the same sense that the practice of medicine is a business enterprise; in the same sense that the preaching of the gospel is a business enterprise. The business of the one is the saving of human life, when attacked by disease; of the other, the saving of human souls, if we may believe its advocates. The business of the Keeley Cure is the redemption of drunkards; the restoration to manhood and all that is implied in that word, of men who had long ago been given up by the honest and earnest temperance reformers as hopeless cases; at least, as beyond the reach of any agencies known to or employed by them. Can it be accounted for as a jealousy of methods which succeed where those with which they were familiar have avowedly failed?

And now, lest an ulterior purpose be suspected in the writing of these pages, let me assure the reader that I am not now connected in any way with the Keeley work, and have no interest in it other than that which any man must have, who knows from an experience of three years that it has made good its every claim in his own case, and who desires that the truth shall be more widely known, to the end that the victims of drink and drug, and all interested in their welfare and their possible salvation, may not only take heart of hope, but have assurance that a cure for their disease is at hand and available.

Since the above was written I have seen the report of Surgeon Jones of the Leavenworth Home, to June 30, 1895. The total number of cases treated at that institution since March 29, 1892, has been 1,301. The following figures will be of interest:

Ratio of lapses per 100 for whole number treated from establishment of Institute (March 29, 1892) to June 30, 1895.	11.82
Ratio of lapses per 100 for whole number treated from July 1, 1894, to June 30, 1895.	5.81
Oldest graduate, Home veteran.	80 years
Youngest " " " "	46 "
Average age.	61 "