

## WHAT CAUSES DELIRIUM?

That delirium tremens is the direct result of overindulgence in alcohol is well understood. But how does such overindulgence act? And why should some hard drinkers never “see snakes,” while other and much milder victims visualize them to such a degree that loss of life follows? According to an editorial writer in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, these are still mysteries. Theories of delirium tremens are not wanting, but they are so many as to indicate that the truth is yet undiscovered in its completeness.

There appears to be an interesting, though disquieting, reason for revival of research in the subject just now. The writer tells us that since the Harrison Narcotic Law went into effect, many drug habitués, having exhausted their supply and failing to obtain more, have turned to alcohol as a substitute. In some who had been drinking for years, the sudden and marked increase in the amount of liquor consumed has led to the frequent occurrence of delirium tremens. After noting that “chronic alcoholic poisoning produces well-known changes in the central and peripheral nervous system,” he adds, in substance:

“As yet, however, no changes have been found in the brain which explain why a man who has been drinking for years suddenly develops a delirium which runs a definite course of from three to five days, or even longer.

“It has been thought that delirium tremens is an acute infection occurring in chronic alcoholics. Nevertheless, many cases run their entire course without fever, and Nonne found blood-cultures negative in fifteen consecutive cases examined by him. Dolken believes that continued drinking of alcohol results in the production of a poisonous substance in the brain itself, and that an accumulation or concentration of this substance produces delirium tremens. Jacobson explains the delirium as an autointoxication, the toxin arising from the pneumococcus gaining entrance through the liver, the kidneys, or the intestinal tract, and acting on a brain, which has been poisoned over a long period of time by alcohol. The view of Hertz differs from this in that the supposed poison that precipitates the delirium comes from an insufficiency on the part of the kidneys. According to Bonhoeffer, chronic alteration in the intestinal tract is responsible for the elaboration of poison, which is normally excreted through the lungs. Wagner von Jauregg believes that the liver, rather than the lungs, is the organ that fails to eliminate the poison, and he thinks that this failure is due to the changes occurring in the liver in chronic alcoholism. Kauffman has asserted that this poison is a carbon derivative acting on a medulla altered as a result of chronic alcoholism. He believes that the delirium will persist until the production of this carbon derivative stops.”

All of these theories presuppose a poisoned central nervous system. It has been objected, however, that many chronic drinkers never suffer delirium. It has been suggested that different poisons may result from excessive drink and that only one of these may cause delirium tremens. There are, however, still other theories:

“The possibility that delirium is due to an increase in the pressure and amount of the spinal fluid has recently been considered. Jauregg, of Vienna, assumes that the body of chronic alcoholics protects itself by the production of an anti-alcohol, which is of the nature of an antitoxin. When a hard drinker suddenly stops taking alcohol, this anti-alcoholic substance, having no alcohol to which to affix itself, acts on the body in such a manner as to produce delirium tremens. Hare maintains that the development of delirium

is due to a sudden fall in the amount of alcohol circulating in the blood of alcoholics. His evidence is drawn from a study of seventy-five cases, in nearly all of which there was a great reduction in the amount of alcohol absorbed prior to the onset of delirium.”

An increasing number of doctors are beginning to realize that many, if not most, of the diseases to which mankind is subject are due to the state of the mind and the emotions we entertain. They know that joy and sorrow, optimism and pessimism, are great and determining factors with respect to health and disease. They realize the healing effect of faith and hope and the debilitating action of fear and worry in advancing or retarding convalescence. Examples are not wanting to show that fear can kill and that hope may resurrect one who is standing upon the brink of the grave and almost as good as dead. Yet in so many instances, they cling furiously and tenaciously to the materialistic explanations, instead of seeking for a psychological source of disease. This is the case with delirium tremens. In the theories concerning this disease which have been recorded in the foregoing, several of them have come curiously close to the spiritual reason but have failed to find the solution to the query because they did not go far enough. Alcohol is a spirit and only spirit can act upon spirit; hence, when it is taken into the human body, it has a direct effect upon the spirit in man.

The idea that delirium is due to an increase in the pressure and amount of the spinal fluid is partially right, but it should be remembered that the so-called spinal fluid is not a fluid at all during the life of man. This assertion is made with full knowledge of the fact that surgeons have repeatedly tapped the spinal canal and extracted spinal fluid therefrom. But it might as well be said that steam is a fluid because the engineer can draw water out of a boiler wherein the steam is generated. By the aid of the spiritual sight, it is easy to observe that the spinal fluid, when the human being is alive and in normal health, is a gaseous or even ethereal substance, which is ruled by the mystic planet Neptune and holds the key to the invisible worlds.

In the course of human evolution, by a pure life, the spinal spirit fire is enkindled and set into vibration to such an extent that it also vibrates the pituitary body and the pineal gland, two mystic organs whose functions the scientists are still unable to determine. One is ruled by Uranus, the planet of intuition, and the other by Neptune, the planet of divinity, and just as the electric arc plays between the positive and negative carbon electrodes in an arc lamp, producing a brilliant light which illumines all the surroundings, so also when this spinal spirit fire plays between these two little organs, are they illumined and the man enabled to see that which was hitherto invisible; for we know that vision depends upon the rate of vibration and the vibratory rate set up between these organs is of the same pitch as that which prevails in the invisible world.

Similarly, when a man takes the spirit of alcohol into his body, the whole structure commences vibrating at a different rate from that which previously prevailed. A high pressure is set up in the spinal canal by the alcoholic spirit vibrations, and in some cases the arc is formed between the pituitary body and the pineal gland of the drunkard so that also he becomes attuned to the invisible world.

But let it be understood that just as there are a number of vibrations in the solar spectrum determining what we sense as the various colors, so also in the invisible worlds are there different strata, each with its own vibratory rate, and each stratum is inhabited by the beings who vibrate to that condition. Thus, the spinal spirit fire generated by the legitimate means of high and noble ideals, a pure and noble life, generate a vibration

which correlates the spirit to what we might call the angelic regions; but the low and bestial vibrations generated by the alcoholic spirit takes its devotee into the bestial regions, where the low and sensual desires and emotions of mankind—passion, lust, hatred, greed, and malice—embody themselves in the demoniac shapes seen by the victim of alcoholism.

Nor should it occasion surprise that, as said in the article quoted, some hard drinkers never become subject to attacks of delirium tremens, while others who do not drink nearly as much are gripped by the disease. It all depends upon the nature—whether sensitive or insensitive, emotional or cold-blooded. No other drugs affect all people alike; therefore, it should cause no surprise that alcohol also acts differently on different people.