

Memoirs
of the Section on Alcohol Studies
Yale University

No. 2

Inebriety, Social Integration, and Marriage

SELDEN D. BACON, PH.D.

Published for the Section on Alcohol Studies by

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF STUDIES ON ALCOHOL

New Haven

1945

COPYRIGHT, 1945, BY JOURNAL OF STUDIES ON ALCOHOL, INC.

Printed in the United States of America.

The Section on Alcohol Studies (School of Alcohol Studies) of the Laboratory of Applied Physiology, Yale University, is engaged in sociological, legal and statistical research relating to the problems of alcohol. The results of these studies are published in the QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF STUDIES ON ALCOHOL, or as monographs in the series of *Memoirs of the Section on Alcohol Studies*, or in both forms. The present monograph constitutes Memoir No. 2 in this series and has appeared in the QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF STUDIES ON ALCOHOL, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 86-125, and Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 303-39, 1944.

Inebriety, Social Integration, and Marriage

I. INTRODUCTION

THE problem of inebriety has at least one similarity to the problem of poverty: it is always with us. In spite of its long history and serious character, and in spite of the efforts of individuals and organizations and the studies of scientists, reformers, and philanthropists, the problem is still unsolved. Most of the scientific studies in the field of "alcoholism" have been conducted by physicians, physiologists, and psychiatrists. It is the purpose of the present research to illustrate the possibilities of a sociological approach to a limited portion of the problem.

The sociological approach neither denies the medical or psychiatric conclusions, nor does it intimate that sociological material has been forgotten by nonsociologists. It is felt, however, that sociology can offer to the other disciplines an orientation within which their principles may be seen to operate, an orientation which may well influence emphasis in research and which may modify or expand applications of therapy. Further, although many writers have considered such sociological subjects as the occupational category, nationality background, or marital status of inebriates, it does not appear that they have done so with the purposes or methods or appreciation which sociologists would bring to the task of analysis, comparison, or synthesis of such data.

In addition to the purpose of bringing to the field of alcohol studies an approach which, if not new, is at least of a different emphasis, two other purposes are envisaged: (1) a sociological purpose, namely, to investigate whether constellations of behavior occur in a group marked by a social deviation such as drunkenness; that is, when a socially pathologic condition exists in one aspect of behavior, must it reflect through other aspects of behavior; (2) a first step toward the development of prognostic criteria for the disposition of cases by judges, institutional personnel, and probation or parole