

Dr Lettsom's Moral and Physical Table (CR1291/458)

Many of us will be thinking about indulging in an alcoholic beverage or two over the next few weeks, and as a service to the community, we offer this month's document as a timely reminder of the evils of hard drink!

Although printed material is not usually collected by archives, this is enclosed within Mrs Anne Greswold's notebook of '*Household Receiptes*' or recipes, dated 1738 and may point to some concerns she had about the consumption of alcohol.¹ As the temperance movement did not begin to gather pace until the 19th century, Mrs Greswold may have been ahead of her time.

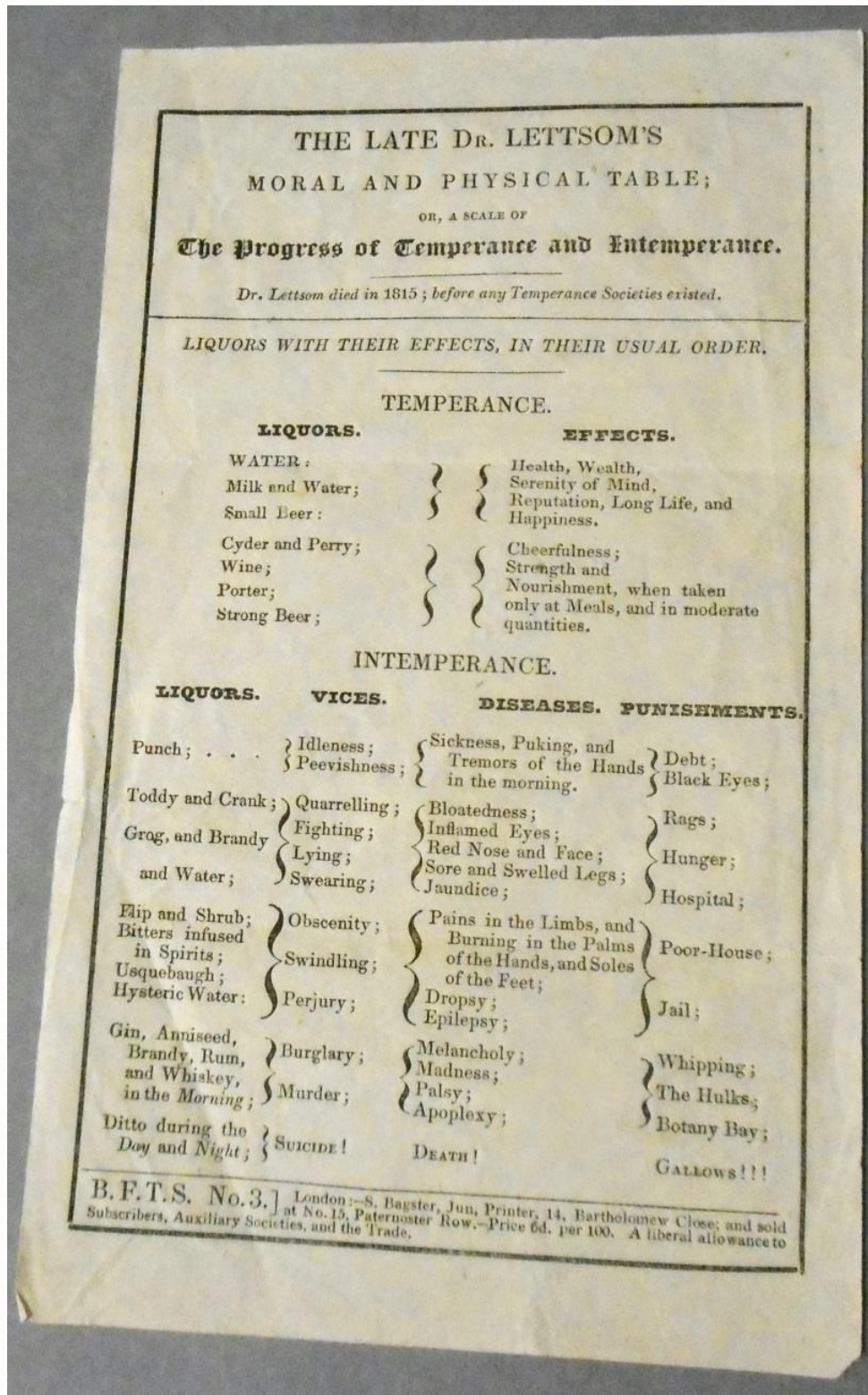
Dr Lettsom's Moral and Physical Table shows some of the dire consequences of hard drinking, but curiously, does not advocate total abstinence. Moderate consumption of strong beer, cider and wine is said to promote cheerfulness and strength, while imbibing the more esoteric concoctions of the day is seen to end only in the poorhouse or jail.

The table's unfamiliar brews include crank (gin and water), shrub (brandy, sugar and fruit juice) and flip, an exciting blend of ale, sugar, eggs and spices which was made to flip, or froth, with the addition of a red hot poker from the fire. Happily, Warwickshire County Record Office collections include a recipe for shrub, involving nine pints of brandy and two pints of lemon juice.² Maybe this is one for the Christmas party?

Although the table seems whimsically humorous to modern eyes, John Coakley Lettsom was no dilettante evangelist. He was a qualified physician who undertook pioneering work into alcoholism and was friends with some of the most famous names of his age, including James Boswell (an alcoholic himself) and US President, Benjamin Franklin.³

References

- 1 CR1291/458: part of the Greswold Family of Malvern Hall collection
- 2 CR2981/6/3/49: in case anyone wants to try this for themselves
- 3 Rix, K, 'John Coakley Lettsom and Some of the Effects of Hard Drinking, *Journal of Alcohol and Alcholism*, Vol. 11, No.3, 1976



THE LATE DR. LETTSOM'S
MORAL AND PHYSICAL TABLE;
OR, A SCALE OF
The Progress of Temperance and Intemperance.

Dr. Lettsom died in 1815; before any Temperance Societies existed.

LIQUORS WITH THEIR EFFECTS, IN THEIR USUAL ORDER.

TEMPERANCE.

LIQUORS.	EFFECTS.
WATER :	} } Health, Wealth, Serenity of Mind, Reputation, Long Life, and Happiness.
Milk and Water;	
Small Beer :	
Cyder and Perry;	} } Cheerfulness; Strength and Nourishment, when taken only at Meals, and in moderate quantities.
Wine;	
Porter;	
Strong Beer;	

INTEMPERANCE.

LIQUORS.	VICES.	DISEASES.	PUNISHMENTS.
Punch; . . .	} Idleness; } Peevishness;	} Sickness, Puking, and } Tremors of the Hands } in the morning.	} Debt; } Black Eyes;
Toddy and Crank;	} Quarrelling;	} Bloatedness;	} Rags;
Grog, and Brandy	} Fighting;	} Inflamed Eyes;	} Hunger; } Hospital;
and Water;	} Lying; } Swearing;	} Red Nose and Face; } Sore and Swelled Legs; } Jaundice;	
Flip and Shrub;	} Obscenity; } Swindling; } Perjury;	} Pains in the Limbs, and } Burning in the Palms } of the Hands, and Soles } of the Feet;	} Poor-House; } Jail;
Bitters infused in Spirits;			
Usquebaugh; Hysteric Water:			
Gin, Anniseed, Brandy, Rum, and Whiskey, in the Morning;	} Burglary; } Murder;	} Melancholy; } Madness; } Palsy; } Apoplexy;	} Whipping; } The Hulks; } Botany Bay;
Ditto during the Day and Night;	} SUICIDE!	DEATH!	GALLOWS!!!

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Wine is fine with meals but watch out for gin in the evening!
Warwickshire County Record Office, CR1291/458