

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

REFORMING INEBRIATES.

The reformation of inebriates is a difficult work. The drink habit seems to have the double effect of developing an abnormal craving and weakening the will power that is essential to any voluntary resistance of temptation to indulge that craving.

The cases in which drunkenness is permanently cured are very few, and the longer that reformatory efforts are postponed, the more hopeless is the situation.

The ordinary methods of dealing with the offence of drunkenness are more likely to intensify the evil than to remedy it. In his intervals of sobriety, the inebriate is tormented not merely with physical desire, nervous irritability and suffering, but with mental humiliation and remorse. He recognizes the means of temporary relief from his distress in what he knows is the cause of it, but his enfeebled power of resistance fails to prevent him from further indulgence.

Our police methods place him under a temporary restraint that tends to raise the physical craving to a maximum, and adds to the sense of disgrace.

Fear of the obloquy of arrest and publicity may have a deterrent effect on men inclined to give way to appetite, but when the offence has been committed the usual alternative penalty of a fine or imprisonment never does any good to any offender.

There is a general agreement among those who have studied the matter that this evil ought to be dealt with by methods based upon common sense and scientific facts. There ought to be medical treatment, effort to develop industry and self-respect, and in necessary cases, physical restraint for a period long enough to permit of effective results.

The evil is so extensive, and so serious in its consequences to many others besides the offender, that indifference towards it is strange, and effort to deal with it ought to command encouragement and support.

The Ontario Society for the Reformation of Inebriates is not an organization simply for the study of conditions, but is a practical movement for the mitigation of evils. Its objects and methods deserve a support which they have not received. For the purpose of making this work better known, says Pioneer, we have pleasure in reprinting an address delivered by the President, Professor G. M. Wrong, M. A., last year at the Eighth Canadian Conference of Charities and Correction, as it was reported in the proceedings of that interesting meeting. It is as follows:

What the Ontario Society for the Reformation of Inebriates Stands for.

1. It stands for the reformation, not for the punishment of inebriates, and the principle upon which it bases its hope of reformation is that, linked with the appeal to the drunkard's conscience, there should be the effort to remove physical causes which promote drunkenness. The best medical opinion of the day pronounces inebriety a disease. We can treat it effectively only when we recognize its real nature.

2. The Society stands for the condemnation of present prevalent methods. In the city of Toronto, in 1904, 7,149 persons, 965 of them women, were charged with drunkenness, a startling increase by the way of 1,724 upon the previous year. What did we do with them? Speaking roughly, we discharged them, or fined them, or sent them to gaol. Yet many of these people were drunk as the result of a physical disease, and to send them to gaol or to fine them was as sensible as it would be to fine or imprison a man because he had the smallpox.

Sending some of them to gaol would not be so bad if we kept them there long enough to let nature do the work of purifying their systems. But we send them down over and over again on short terms; the experience encourages moral laxity; in some cases the family is thus deprived of its wage-earner, and all this suffering is accompanied by no consolation that good has been done for the man. Fallen in his own and others' esteem, he is turned out against the temptation before Time, the great healer, can do her work for him.

3. The Society stands for the reorganization of our methods on the basis of common sense and of present day knowledge.

(a) If a man is a drunkard and known as such, he should be sent to prison for a long, not for a short, term, and should be treated medically as a "person diseased"—of course, moral and spiritual influences should not be overlooked.

(b) Imprisonment is not necessary for a man who is not a confirmed drunkard. It is necessary that the gravity of his offence should be impressed upon him, and that he should be encouraged and helped to do better. But instead of going to gaol (a) he should be let out on probation on condition that he submits to medical treatment; (b) he should not only be treated medically; (c) he should have daily supervision and encouragement to do better. If he fails to respond to this treatment and offends again a long period in confinement with proper treatment is necessary.

These ideals are not in the clouds. They are being realized in other countries, and now too in Canada. Professor Wrong here read a long and interesting letter from Recorder Weir, of Montreal, outlining his use of these methods in the court over which he presides. A beginning on similar lines is being made in Toronto. Police Magistrate Denison has promised his co-operation. After long effort, within the last few days, arrangements have been made by which a limited number of inebriates, instead of being kept in gaol, will be treated at one of our hospitals. This is a good beginning. But more must come. We desire (1) that police magistrates may be given power to make the inebriate submit to medical treatment in lieu of imprisonment. (2) Hospitals for wards in hospitals are necessary for this suffering class. At present few hospitals will receive them. (3) The inebriate requires constant oversight from both a physician and a probation officer charged with the daily oversight of his conduct.

All this means the expenditure of money. Governments and individuals must alike be asked for help. But a beginning has been made, and it is not unlikely that twenty-five years from now men will look back upon the former methods of treating inebriety in much the same way as we look upon the former bleeding by a surgeon as cure-all for disease.

The June number of the Fortnightly, (Leonard Scott Publication Co., New York), opens with an article on The Education Question, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ripon. Then we have two articles on Russia—Russia at the Parting of the Ways, by Prof. Paul Vinogradoff, and The First Russian Parliament, by Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport. "Ouida" has an excellent article on Richard Burton, and Mrs. John Lane writes in her bright and amusing way on The Minor Crimes.

One of the greatest comforts that we have as we approach the River of Death is that Jesus Christ is there waiting for us. We shall not go alone into the water.

ROOSEVELT AND THE MUCK-RAKE.

The May number of Current Literature (34 West 26th St., New York) gives an important place to criticism of Roosevelt's "Muck-rake speech." The President was careful to distinguish between those writers who are indiscriminate in their assaults upon the character of public men and those who remember that an attack even upon an evil man is of use only when free from hysterical exaggeration and absolutely true. "Expose the crime and hunt down the criminal," he said, "but remember that even in the case of crime if it is attacked in sensational, lurid and untruthful fashion, it may do more damage to the public mind than the crime itself." Worse even than hysterical excitement is "a sudden acquiescence in evil," and the present unrest is therefore an encouraging sign; but if it is to result in permanent good, the emotion must be translated into action that is marked by honesty, sanity and self-restraint. "There is mightily little good in a mere spasm of reform. The reform that counts is that which comes through steady, continuous growth. Violent emotionalism leads to exhaustion." The work of reform is not merely a long uphill pull. "There is almost as much of breaching work as of collar work; to depend only on traces means that there will soon be a runaway and an upset." Moreover, "The Eighth Commandment reads: 'Thou shalt not steal.' It does not read: 'Thou shalt not steal from the poor man.' It reads simply and plainly, 'Thou shalt not steal.' No good whatever will come from that warped and mock morality which denounces the misdeeds of men of wealth and forgets the misdeeds practised at their expense; which denounces bribery, but blinds itself to blackmail; which foams with rage if a corporation secures favor by improper methods and merely laments with hideous mirth if the corporation is itself wronged. The only public servant who can be trusted honestly to protect the rights of the public against the misdeed of a corporation is that public man who will just as surely protect the corporation itself from wrongful aggression. If a public man is willing to yield to popular clamor and do wrong to the men of wealth or to rich corporations, it may be set down as certain that if the opportunity comes he will secretly and furtively do wrong to the public in the interest of a corporation." Throughout the address the President evinced fear of an injurious reaction in the public mind, and he went so far as to point out one case in which injury has already been done to the public service. "One serious difficulty," he said, "encountered in getting the right type of men to dig the Panama Canal is the certainty that they will be exposed both without and I am sorry to say, within Congress to utterly reckless assaults on their capacity and character." What the President said on this subject has received general approval both from radicals and conservatives.

The coronation of King Haakon and Queen Maud in the ancient Norwegian capital of Trondheim is described as strikingly impressive in its sombre simplicity. The granite grandeur of the old cathedral was unmarred by unfortunate attempts at decoration. The ladies-in-waiting were simply gowned, wearing neither feathers nor trains. The crown of King Oscar appeared throughout the ceremony in imminent danger of falling over King Haakon's ears, but even in this trying circumstance King Haakon maintained his own dignified bearing.