

Nothing can be more true than this statement. We have known cases in which not the *taste* only, but the mere smell of alcoholic liquor has, after months,—nay, in one case, after over a year of rigid abstinence,—provoked indomitable relapse. We believe, that even in Canada, a few very *illustrious* examples of this fearful mania, (for a real mania it is), might be adduced.

Among Dr. Barton's observations relative to the treatment of dipsomaniacs, the following pungent enunciation of his estimation of the legislating capacity of lawyers, is as refreshing as it is pertinent: "As long as lawyers have the making of laws for the treatment of insanity, so long shall our laws be inadequate." And yet, what law has ever yet reached enactment in relation to insanity, or to any other moral evil, or physical affliction, which has escaped the tinkering interferences of these quacks? The sublime diagnostic autocracy displayed by this class, whether at the bar in prosecution or defence, or on the bench in sage exposition of a somatic malady, of whose protean character they have as little practical knowledge as a clod-hopper has of Newton's theory of optics, is one of the richest treats which an experienced alienist need desire. In no other department of mundane affairs can so convincing a proof be afforded of the fact, that the highest pretension to consummate knowledge of a subject, must be based on utter ignorance of all its actual phenomena; and it will be strange indeed, if an expert witness will escape the contumelious insinuation, that his long intimacy with mental dethronement has eventuated in his own mental eclipse. It might, to a sane man, appear rather absurd to be told that an anatomist, who has made the study and dissection of the body a life-work, or the physiologist, who has spent long years in experimentation of its functions, must know less of these sciences than the man who has never entered the dissecting room, or the laboratory; yet it is not a whit more declarative of stolid ignorance, than are the jeers and snobbish sneers to which an intelligent and honest medical witness may expect to be subjected in the box, or within its precincts.

But we have been tempted into a digression. In truth, to be just to Dr. Barton, his entire essay should be reproduced, which is outside the capacity of our pages. With one most significant practical passage, we must close our citations, and it is as follows:—

"If a man is found to be a confirmed dipsomaniac, and is constantly getting ill, and getting into all kinds of scrapes, the worst thing his friends can do, is to be constantly paying his debts and setting him straight again. It only encourages him to continue his practices, feeling that he will always be extricated by some one."

Dr. B.'s matured conviction is that this class of inebriates are incapable of self-control, and of self-reclamation, and that no maudlin, sentimental tenderness as to their personal liberty should deter communities or legislatures from dealing with them as their own best interests, and those of their dependent relatives, as well as the public weal, demand. We are entirely in accord with Dr. B. in this conviction, and we venture to say that it would be endorsed by the great majority of the medical profession.

PORNOGRAFIA DE BUENOS AYRES.

Under the above heading (which our Greek reading subscribers will readily interpret), Dr. Dupont has been contributing to the *Revista Medico-Quirurgica* of Buenos Ayres, a series of very instructive articles, with the view of demonstrating "the necessity of a Dispensary of Health, and a bureau of public morals (costumbres) for the regulation and repression of prostitution."

Dr. Dupont's arguments in this relation are chiefly drawn from official statements of similar establishments in Europe; and as we are not very clear in our impressions as to the actual *general* efficiency of the system, we prefer, for the present, to leave this part of his subject under deliberation.

We believe, however, that a perusal of some of the statistics cited by Dr. D., from a thesis by Dr. Fidanza on the prevalence of venereal diseases in Buenos Ayres, may be interesting to our readers, the majority of whom we are happy to think, have had but comparatively meagre opportunities of practical acquaintance with the ravages of this class of diseases.

In the general hospital of San Roque, from 1861 to 1870, inclusive (ten years), the admissions were, of men 29,684, and of women 7,704. Of the former, 6,497, or nearly 22 per cent., were cases of venereal disease, and of the latter, 362 were of the same form, or only 5 per cent.

In the 5 years from 1872 to 1877, inclusive, the