

The Temperance Cause.

THE WILD MANIA FOR GIVING ALCOHOL.

It is within the knowledge of all of us, that a marked change has, comparatively, recently taken place as regards this most important question of alcohol-giving, and in the belief as to its necessity; our every-day experience, the tone of medical debates, the common current of conversation, all bear evidence in the same direction; but it is almost impossible to treat evidence of this kind, or even the results of private practice, statistically, or to reduce them to a clear tabular form; but it occurred to me that the hospitals might give more definite information. I applied therefore, to the secretaries of the large metropolitan clinical hospitals, and have received, from all except two, replies containing most interesting, important, valuable facts. I trust that the tables which I have thus been enabled to construct will interest you. They place, I think, in a more trenchant and striking light than anything else with which I am acquainted, the rise and fall of excessive alcohol-giving; and it is worthy of remark, as showing the influence and (may I say?) the contagiousness of custom, how very uniform in point of time this rise and fall has been in almost all the hospitals.

You will see how rapid was the increase in the use of alcohol between the years 1852 and 1862, and, indeed, in many cases up to the year 1872; and you cannot fail to trace therein the great influence of the teachings and writings of Dr. Todd, and especially of his views on the "Treatment of Acute Diseases." You see also that even where there was some diminution in the use of alcohol between the years 1862 and 1872, the difference was not, generally speaking, large; but when the wrongness and the evils of this excessive use of stimulants began to force themselves upon men's minds; and, thanks to this, and to the careful, prudent, and honest energy of Parkes, a change of practice occurred, the consumption of alcohol diminished so much as to show in 1882 a most remarkable reduction in the cost of wine and spirits in all the hospitals (except St. George's) from which I have received returns. Thus (without making corrections for the somewhat increasing number of beds), the cost of wine and spirits consumed every tenth year, from 1852 to 1882, at Guy's, was £496, £1,231, £1,446, and £953; at Middlesex, £215, £550, £413, and £353; at Westminster, £208, £432, £367, and £137.

On the other hand, the use of milk has most rapidly increased in every hospital without exception, and has replaced—I believe greatly to the advantage to the patients—the alcohol in the treatment of disease. The quantity consumed in 1852 at St. Bartholomew's cost £684, and in 1882, £2,012; at Guy's £236 and £1,488, respectively; at the London hospital, £426 and £2,427; and so on.—*Dr. Hare.*

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What is Catarrh?

(From the Mail, Can., Dec. 14th.)

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