

## Liquor Traffic—Ontario.

to become insane from any other cause as of that intemperance, though undoubtedly in a large number of instances alcohol is the exciting cause—not the predisposing cause, but the exciting cause. In other words, says Tuke, a man is mentally on the balance between insanity and sanity, and it just needs an excess in anything, it matters not whether it is alcohol or tea or venery, to tumble him over into the abyss of insanity.

12460a. Can you tell us, as the result of your observation, whether insanity has been increasing or not in the last few years?—If you were simply to take the statistics, yes.

12461a. We are told that temperance has been greatly increasing year by year?—Here you have on the one hand an increase of insanity as given by the statistics, and on the other hand an increase of temperance. I might say that this would prove that temperance was a very bad thing from a sanitary point of view.

12462a. That would hardly be a fair conclusion?—Of course, it would be a *post hoc* argument.

12463a. Nobody would assert for a moment that temperance was a predisposing cause of insanity; but the question is whether the fact may not suggest the question as to there being other causes or influences which are more likely to produce insanity?—I think that to take the statistics just as a casual observer might, and use them as a basis for a special line of argument, would be both unwise and wrong, for this reason. While the number of cases of insanity has undoubtedly increased, a good deal of the increase is more apparent than real on account of the greater facilities that now exist for placing patients in the asylums both public and private. The patients get very much better treatment in the asylums now than they do at home. Our asylum treatment is very much improved. People do not hesitate as they did in former years to have their friends committed. In all these ways there may be an apparent increase of insanity.

12464a. Have you considered at all whether the conditions of modern life in the way of the rush of business and fast living—I mean living at a high pressure—have been a predisposing cause of insanity?—Undoubtedly they are, but not to so great an extent as you might imagine. The asylum is more largely recruited from the farming community. In fact, they furnish the overwhelming preponderance of the insane; and yet the farming community, speaking generally, so far as alcoholic liquors are concerned, are very temperate. While business troubles undoubtedly cause a very large proportion of the cases of insanity, still, in many instances, as Dr. Tuke and Dr. Bucknill have pointed out, much of this insanity could be prevented by the timely use of alcohol. In the end of my work I have quoted the opinion of Dr. Bucknill in these words: “Alcohol in its physiological action is striptic, retarding the disintegration of the tissues, especially of the nerve tissue; and when the brain is wearing itself into madness, alcohol, at the right time, and in the right doses, without doubt sometimes checks the ebb-tide of reason.” Neither Dr. Bucknill, nor Dr. Tuke are by any means prejudiced in favour of the use of alcohol, because in no other country, if I except the northern districts of France, is there so large a proportion of insanity in connection with intemperance in the use of liquor as there is in England, especially in London.

12465a. You have told us the effect of spirits as distinguished from beer, and *vice versa*. Can you tell us whether the ordinary whisky of commerce, when diluted with water is injurious?—No. I have considerably modified my views in reference to that. Some five or six years ago I was more inclined to place whisky completely on the shelf as a beverage than I am at the present time. I think there are a large class of persons to whom beer is not suitable; and in those cases, where they cannot get a wine which suits their constitution at a reasonable price—and this must always be taken into consideration in dealing with the habits of the people—then, a good unadulterated whisky, properly diluted down to about fifteen per cent of alcohol, is a very good substitute for all the other liquors, and in fact mostly beneficial.

12466a. Is there a beneficial effect produced by the regulation which has been in force some considerable time, requiring whisky to be kept two years before it is sold?—If whisky were made at the present time exactly as it used to be some fifteen or twenty or twenty-five years ago, there undoubtedly would be. But, practically, there are now two methods of manufacturing whisky. By far the larger proportion is manufactured from what are called silent spirits, with the addition of the others to make up the requisite flavour. Very many