

THE ANCIENTS' CURE FOR DRUNKENNESS.

The offence of drunkenness was a source of great perplexity among the ancients, who tried every possible way of dealing with it. If none succeeded, probably it was because they did not begin early enough by intercepting some of the ways and means by which the insidious vice is incited and propagated. Severe treatment was often tried to little effect. The Locrians, under Zaleneus, made it a capital offence to drink wine if it was not mixed with water; even an invalid was not exempt from punishment unless by order of a physician. Pittacus, of Mitylene, made a law that he who, when drunk, committed an offence should suffer double the punishment which he would do when sober; and Plato, Aristotle and Plutarch applauded this as the height of wisdom. The Roman censors could expel a Senator for being drunk and take away his horse. Mahomet ordered drunkards to be bastinadoed with eighty blows. Other nations thought of limiting the quantity to be drunk at one time or at one sitting. The Egyptians put some limits, though what is not stated. The Spartans also had some limit. The Arabians fixed the quantity at twelve glasses a man, but the size of the glass was unfortunately not clearly defined by the historians. The Anglo-Saxons went no further than to order silver nails to be fixed on drinking cups, so that each might know the proper measure. And it is said that this was done by King Edgar, after noticing the drunken habits of the Danes. Lycurgus of Thrace went to the root of the matter by ordering the vines to be cut down. And his conduct was imitated in 704 by Terhulus of Bulgaria. The Suevi prohibited wine to be imported; and the Spartans tried to turn the vice into contempt by systematically making their slaves drunk once a year to show their children how foolish and contemptible men looked in that state. Drunkenness was deemed much more vicious in some classes of persons than in others. The ancient Indians held it lawful to kill a King when he was drunk. The Athenians made it a capital offence for a magistrate to be drunk; and Charlemagne imitated this by a law that judges on the bench and pleaders should do their business fasting. The Carthagenians prohibited magistrates, governors, soldiers and servants from any drinking. The Scots in the second century made it a capital offence for magistrates to be drunk, and Constantine II. of Scotland, in 861, extended a like punishment to young people. Again, some laws have absolutely