

use of alcohol to excess produces certain molecular changes in the brain cortex, which are apt to be permanent. The result is a lowering of the moral tone, a dulling of the mental powers, and a weakening of the will which constitute an organized, progressive degeneration. Nor is the ill-effect of the excessive use of alcohol confined to the individual himself. There is strong evidence to show that the children of intemperate parents inherit a marked tendency to intemperance, insanity, idiocy, epilepsy, or some other form of mental disorder. Such eminent authorities as Professor Kraepelin of Heidelberg and Professor Berkley of Johns Hopkins University agree in considering alcohol as a powerful factor in the production of insanity, the latter going so far as to say, in his work on mental diseases, "Of all the varied inciting causes of mental infirmities, heredity and alcohol are most important." Personally I would go still further and say that, in the majority of cases at least, inebriety itself is a mental disease,— a true psychological condition. If as has been done, we define an insane person to be, "One who owing to perverted or deficient mental powers, the result of functional or organic disease of the brain, cannot adapt himself to his natural environment, and whose conduct is not in a sufficient degree guided and restrained by the ordinary safeguards of society," we include a large section of those at present known as habitual drunkards. But whether prepared to go thus far or not, I think there are few who will not agree that alcohol does much more harm in the way of producing mental degradation in the many who are never placed under care, than in the few who now find their way into asylums. Everyone is acquainted with men and women whose mental powers are so shattered by long-continued indulgence in drink that they have reached the border-land between sanity and insanity, even if they have not overstepped it.

To try to reform this class by any other means than personal restraint is, "wasting our sweetness on the desert air." They must be placed in custody in an institution, the superintendent of which is clothed with authority to detain his patients for an indefinite length of time. In other words, the same policy in respect to their personal liberty should prevail, as now prevails in respect of lunatics. It matters not what the form of commitment be, provided it is statutory and means a definite and prolonged term of oversight and treatment. This treatment should be conducted in a special establishment where work of various kinds,— one of the best of remedies,—can be enforced after the necessary medical regimen has paved the way for it. In this manner the cost of maintenance would be greatly lessened.

As early as 1833, Dr. Woodward, soon after taking charge of the