

Temperance Column.

THE TREATMENT OF FEMALE INEBRIETY.

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Drunkards Legis. Com., &c.

(Continued.)

The second condition of cure is employment. Idleness is the foster mother of drunkenness; industry is the bulwark of Temperance. Let the mind of the penitent inebriate be kept occupied by attention to regular work, and the task of reformation will be shorn of half its difficulty.

The third condition of cure is to ascertain the pre-disposing and exciting causes of the inebriety, and to endeavour to remove these causes. For example, a female has glided insensibly into the slavery of drink by resorting to alcohol for the relief of agonising pain. Find out the cause of this pain, remedy it, and you have lightened your rescue work enormously. Or, again, if hysteria or epilepsy has been the provocation, rectify the unhealthy state, and the crave for relief from the torpor-yielding properties of a narcotic ceases.

The fourth condition of cure is to restore the physical and mental tone. This can be done by appropriate medical treatment, by fresh air and exercise, by nourishing and digestible food to reconstruct healthy bodily tissue and brain cell; aided by intellectual and educational influences.

The fifth condition of cure is the strengthening of the moral control, so that, even if the system be not perfectly restored to health and vigor, the morbid unhealthful crave and impulse to intoxication may be resisted with success. Here the purifying, elevating, invigorating influence of pure and undefiled religious principle has a noble mission, second only to its still higher and holier office of conversion. Speaking simply as a physician, the hallowed influence of genuine spiritual self-surrender, the blessed calm of a regenerated heart, the comforting assurance of Divine aid, are the most potent strengtheners of a feeble individuality. The length of time required to effect a cure varies with the peculiarities of the case. A very few are cured in a short time, the majority require from one to three years' treatment, and some are so (humanly speaking) incurable that permanent restraint is the only apparent safety to themselves and to others.

The question remains, where should the female inebriate be treated? If taken in time at an early stage of the disease, the female inebriate can be treated at home. I have seen a very few successful cases. But generally the drinking habit has been of long standing, often secret and unknown to the friends, and it is important to take the victim away from her inebriate associations, from her cunningly devised methods of pro-

curing liquor surreptitiously. For example, in one sad case in which the husband never suspected the cause of his wife's premature death, till at her death-bed this was revealed to him, the mother had taught her daughter to bring the drink into the house concealed in her muff. The weak and broken-down drunkard should be sent to a genuine Home, within the confines of which no intoxicant is permitted, where she can breathe an air untainted by alcohol, whence body and brain may be enabled to emerge in due time freed from the benumbing, soul-destroying liquid portion, in which they had been literally soaked.

Nowhere can the condition of cure which I have enumerated be so effectually employed as in a strictly Teetotal and Christian institution for the special treatment of such cases; nowhere else can that firmness and discipline which are so valuable aids in reformation be so strictly enforced; nowhere else can employment of various kinds be so effectively organised for the personal benefit of the patient, and as a means of contributing to the expense of their board and maintenance. Laundry work, sewing and needle work, are occupations which can be carried on with great advantage. More genuine homes, with the treatment of the patients by a medical man skilled in the disease of inebriety, are urgently required; but let me venture a word of warning to those enthusiastic reformers who fancy that such homes are likely to be self-supporting. A not inconsiderable experience has afforded no case of such an establishment having been successfully conducted without extraneous aid. For the well-to-do and rich there are institutions which not only support themselves, but return a profit to the proprietor. The destitute and impecunious, on the other hand, must be taken free or for a very small payment, and a generous annual subscription list, in addition to ample funds for the equipment of the Home, is absolutely necessary.

One great hinderance to permanent cure is the astounding fact that after a long residence in an honest Teetotal Home the discharged patient will, in many cases, be tempted immediately on reaching her own home by the fermented wine or beer placed on the dinner table.

Liverpool has done well in her Vergmont Sanatorium and recently opened Shelter. But there are other establishments for inebriates which are by no means satisfactory, it is necessary that great care be taken to enquire into the real character and genuineness of any such Institution.

It is melancholy to reflect that there is no licensed Home where a female inebriate, unless she is possessed of means, can surrender her liberty under the provisions of the Habitual Drunkards Act, but let us hope that the time is not far distant when an enlightened and aroused public conscience, when a consistent and drink-divorced

Christian Church, will give the Legislature no peace till, as in the great Republic of the West, there shall be provision for the poorest inebriate who, awake to her danger and repentant of her sins, will be willing to surrender her freedom in the eager hope of deliverance from her worse than Egyptian bondage.

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