

Temperance Column.

At the annual public meeting of the Church of England Temperance Society of the Diocese of Toronto, held in St. James' school-house, Toronto, Dr. Elliott, of Orillia, had "The Relation of the Medical Profession to Temperance Reform" as his subject. He brought forward the results of experiments made by Dr. Carpenter, Dr. Richardson and other eminent members of the profession, which showed that alcohol was injurious to vegetable and animal life. It injured the blood and the brain, and was capable of being transmitted to offspring. The nervous system was particularly injured by alcohol. Investigation showed that even a small quantity of liquor daily was injurious. Alcohol had in the past been largely used as a medicine. This was based upon the theory that it was a stimulant, but investigation showed that it was not a true stimulant. Three results should be caused by a stimulant—heightened vital action, increased vital energy, and enlarged vital power, but it had been shown that alcohol was in no sense a food; it was rather a narcotic. It merely excited, and the excitement was followed by a corresponding reaction. Oxygen is a good example of a stimulant. It enters into combination with the carbon in the blood, and causes combustion; in the process heat is generated, as well as vital force and vital energy. Something is added to the system. Alcohol interferes with the absorption of oxygen, and so the temperature is lowered, as proved by the experience of Arctic explorers. Sudden mental excitement and strong emotion are examples that a mere excitant is not a stimulant. The forces already existing are rendered more active, but nothing is added; there is no increase of power. The medical profession is rapidly changing its views as to the use and abuse of alcohol. In 1871, a declaration was signed by two hundred and fifty hospital physicians and surgeons in England, protesting against the then existing inconsiderate prescription of large quantities of alcoholic liquids, and since that time its use has been steadily decreasing. A temperance hospital was established in London about twelve years ago, where thousands of cases, medical and surgical, have been successfully treated without the use of alcohol at all. The example thus set has been followed by other institutions, with results that are exerting a considerable influence upon medical opinion throughout the civilized world. A large number of the physicians in Chicago have recently signed a similar declaration, stating that it is the duty of

physicians to prescribe alcohol as they prescribe strychnine, as seldom and as sparingly as possible, at the same time endorsing the teachings of Carpenter and Richardson as to the true nature and physiological action of alcohol. The British Medical Temperance Association was organized about twelve years ago, and now has a membership of upwards of four hundred medical men, all total abstainers, and many of them the very foremost medical men in England, as Sir Henry Thompson, Sir Andrew Clark, Sir William Gull, Dr. Norman Kerr, &c. There are now over two thousand total abstainers among medical men in the United Kingdom. In Ireland alone there are over three hundred. Societies have been formed both in England and the United States for the study and cure of inebriety, which is now generally recognized as a physical rather than a moral disease, and requiring physical treatment, which can only be received in an Inebriate Asylum. There are now upwards of forty inebriate asylums in the United States. The habitual drunkard is there treated like any other lunatic, deprived of his liberty, and placed under medical treatment. When the alcohol has been removed from his brain and nervous system, and he has recovered his will power and natural tone of system, he is placed under moral and religious influences, and so he is sent forth enabled to battle with his foe. The results have been most cheering and encouraging. He was strongly in favor of the establishment of inebriate asylums. He thought they should urge this upon the Government. The speaker thought he might venture to hope that the day was not far distant when the medical men in Canada would take the lead in temperance reform, as they were doing in England and the United States. The Church of England Temperance Society was probably destined to be more successful than any similar society which had preceded it, and that not only because it is formed on so broad a basis, but largely because it encourages and fosters the teachings of the medical profession in regard to intemperance. The addresses of medical temperance reformers is an important feature of its meetings in the Mother Country.—Orillia Packet.

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