

intermeddling, can and should clearly and forcibly point out to his patient the dangers of the road which he is travelling and the goal of a wretched life which he is sure to reach if he does not abandon his inebriating habit. The physician who does not adopt this course does not assume the high privilege to which his position entitles him, and fails to do his duty to the patient under his care : his professional obligation binds him to aid the weakened will by all forces at his command, and by proper regimen and medication to restore, if possible, the injured system to its former healthy condition.

By public addresses, magazine and newspaper articles, private conversation, and especially by example, the members of the medical profession can teach influential lessons on this subject to the communities in which they reside. They can show the poisonous nature of alcoholic beverages, their ravages upon the various organs of the body, even when taken moderately, their power to weaken the will and moral sense, their inutility in aiding the vital processes of the healthy body and in conducting to longevity, the danger that a moderate habit will lead to an excessive habit. The people will listen more attentively to such teachings from the medical profession than from any other source. This is a work to be done in behalf of hygiene and along the line of preventive medicine. The physician can find no broader field for the exercise of his noblest powers.

The excessive inebriate is generally the outgrowth of the moderate inebriate. He drinks to such an extent that the alcohol makes a profound impression on his system ; one or more of the diseases of which alcohol is the prominent causal factor, fastens upon him ; the nervous system is specially affected, as shown by unsteady gait, trembling hands, altered speech ; those phases of inebriety known as delirium tremens and dipsomania may follow ; mental alienation is oftentimes a sequence ; the victim may become demented ; the baser faculties are roused to increased activity and control the moral forces ; the man is overwhelmed by bad passions and may commit crimes of all kinds and degrees. The excessive inebriate is a diseased, degenerated individual. He belongs to the vast army of defectives ; he is a dangerous character, a constant menace to the welfare of home, the peace and good order of society ; at times he

may have the appearance of comparative physical health and mental soundness, may even attend to his business with a certain degree of exactness, but the hour when the alcoholic poison will assume dominion over him no one can foretell ; his relation to his environment is very similar to that of an insane person, and to a large extent he should be treated as are the insane ; indeed his case often assumes a form of insanity.

For the treatment of the excessive inebriate many plans and devices have been suggested—some being the product of dense ignorance and a barbarian age, others, the outcome of an enlightened spirit of scientific investigation. The inebriate will not receive the best treatment for restoration to physical and mental health until alcoholic inebriety has been clearly recognized as a disease both by the medical profession and the laity. All along the centuries the excesses of the habitual drunkard have been regarded as of sufficient importance to call for restraint and punishment. The severe laws of Draco punished drunkenness with death. In the early history of the Massachusetts colony each offence of treating and drinking to the health of another was punished by a fine of fourteen pence. In St. Petersburg at the present day, "Any one found drunk in the street is imprisoned from one to three days, and the person from whom the last drink was bought, if he can be found, is fined from five to twenty-five roubles." The present law of Minnesota punishes drunkards with fine and imprisonment. Massachusetts has a law which makes imprisonment the only punishment for drunkenness. In Sweden, if a man is seen drunk four times he is deprived of his electoral vote. By advice of its best physicians, Saxony has made drunkenness a crime.

During the last twenty-five years homes for the alcoholic inebriated of both a private and public character have been established in this country and in Europe. Dr. Crothers is authority for the statement that in 1887 there were fifty hospitals in America for the treatment of inebriety, with over 1000 patients, besides about 1000 under treatment in private families. In a few instances inebriate hospitals have been founded and are supported by public moneys.

The particular method of treatment adopted for the excessive inebriate has depended largely upon the view taken of his condition. He has been