

## ALCOHOLISM IN FRANCE.

The question of French degeneracy from alcoholism has agitated the public and professional mind of that country for the past eight or ten years, as is evidenced by the constant references to the subject in both the lay and professional press. From all sources comes the unwelcome and dreadful assurances that a *débacle*, more to be dreaded than that pictured by Zola, is at hand. In all civilized countries stimulants are more or less abused, to the undoubted deterioration of the race, but France for the past few decades seems to have gone further than any other nation on the downward path. Not long since Dr. Lannelongue, a member of the House of Deputies, and Professor at the Academy, made a strong appeal against the laxity of the laws concerning the manufacture and sale of alcohol in France. Among other statements made by the learned speaker he said, *Med. Press*, that alcoholism at the present day was not only endangering the public health, but also threatening the very existence of the species; it filled the hospitals, the asylums, the prisons, and populated the penal settlements. Previous to 1850, alcoholism was almost unknown, or rather it had not the same character, the effects were temporary, because the drink taken was pure and natural. But four years afterward, alcohol of vinous origin failed, and immediately it was replaced by that derived from molasses, beetroot, and potatoes, which poisoned the race. In 1830 the number of suicides from alcoholism were 5 per 100,000 persons; they were 21 in 1881, while 46 per cent. of homicides, 74 per cent. of grievous wounding, 54 per cent. of family quarrels, 77 per cent. of outrages against public decency, were due to drink. Against the many afflictions which attack man, against the large number of contagious maladies, epidemic or other, the characteristic of the healthy individual is his organic resistance, which enables him to triumph over all the assaults from his most terrible enemies—microbes. The drunkard, on the other hand, has lost all resistance, and falls an easy prey to disease. At 40 he is already an old man; his tissues are degenerated, so that he makes the worst of patients. It is not the richer classes in France who saturate their bodies with alcohol, because they know better, but the lower classes,

and especially the workmen, who are ill-fed, clothed and lodged. In Brittany, however, women of good position give themselves up to alcohol. Out of 107 young married women who died from drink, 8 were sterile, and of the 99 others there only remained as patients 6 sickly children. On the other hand, these same women had 28 children before having taken to alcohol, who are very healthy, showing what the others might have been if the mothers had led a sober life. What is still worse, continued Dr. Lannelongue, is the fact that the passion of the parents is transmitted to the children. The drunkard engenders an offspring with the same tendency, be they girls or boys, and curious to say, they begin to drink at the same age that the father began to drink.

This strong arraignment from one so well qualified to speak on the subject, suggests horrible possibilities to one of the greatest, indeed in many respects, the greatest nations of the earth.

## THE ANNUAL MEDICAL BANQUETS.

The Trinity Banquet was held at the Rossin House, November 28th, and was by far the most successful of a series of nineteen. Besides members of the Faculty, many prominent men were present as guests, among whom we noticed His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir C. Hibbert Tupper, Hon. G. W. Allan, Provost Welch, Senator Ferguson, Walter S. Lee, Hon. G. W. Ross, Chief Justice Meredith, Hon. J. Beverley Robinson, O. A. Howland, M.P.P., Dr. A. R. Pyne, Rev. Dr. Langtry, Dr. C. O'Reilly and Dr. G. A. Peters.

The chair was ably occupied by Mr. H. Clare, who roused the enthusiasm of Trinity's *alumni*, both young and old, by an eloquent, forcible and loyal speech. Among the other speakers of prominence were Sir C. H. Tupper, Hon. G. W. Ross, the Lieut.-Governor, Chief Justice Meredith and Dean Geikie.

The proceedings of the evening showed how the various committees must have labored to make the event so complete a success. Trinity may well be proud of the large body of young men who owe her a willing and hearty allegiance.

The dinner of Medical Faculty of Toronto University was held in the same place under the chairmanship of Mr. B. G. Connolly, on December 5th. We did not have the honor of an invita-