

Communications.

TREATMENT OF INEBRIATES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CANADA LANCET :

SIR,—In the June number of the LANCET you publish a letter in which I am criticized for not favoring the Keeley method of treating inebriates, for not visiting Keeley Institutes in the United States, for recommending the utilization of local hospitals for the treatment of inebriates, and also for suggesting the appointment by the Government of an inspector of inebriate institutions.

From the character and tone of this communication it is very evident that it was neither written by a medical man nor by a Canadian, and that the writer is more concerned for the interests of the company controlling certain proprietary remedies than for the interests of the unfortunate inebriate.

Although a reply seems almost superfluous under the circumstances, it may possibly serve a useful purpose, if, with your kind permission, I should state some of my reasons for not favoring the Keeley treatment.

A little over a year ago a lady called upon me to secure my interest in the Keeley treatment for inebriate prisoners. She was fortified with a number of documents and publications that placed the Keeley treatment in a most favorable light. I was so well impressed with her presentation of the case that I took some trouble to have her name placed on the programme for a paper to be read on the subject before the National Conference of Charities and Correction which met in Toronto in July last, notwithstanding that the programme had already been arranged for. I spoke favorably of the Keeley treatment to a member of the Ontario Government, to the Inspector of Prisons, as well as to the members of the Prisoners' Aid Association.

During this time I accepted the statistics furnished me as trustworthy. After a careful investigation, however, I was forced to the conclusion that if not absolutely inaccurate, they were at least misleading. For instance, it is claimed that by the introduction of the Keeley treatment in the branches of the U.S. Military Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, from 80% to 90% of those taking treatment for inebriety are permanently cured of their inebriety. I have letters from three of the surgeons of these branches. The first stated that the Keeley treatment was never used in the Home with which he was connected, as they found other treatment quite as effective. The other surgeons state that although the environment of the soldiers in these Homes was most favorable to reformation while taking the Keeley treatment, special privileges being granted to Keeley "graduates," yet not more than 20% to 25% appear to be permanently reformed. One of these surgeons puts the proportion of "cures" at 25%, and the other at only 20%.

I also found that at the Washingtonian Home, Boston, during the last