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## Original Communications.

### THE PUBLIC AND THE DOCTOR IN RELATION TO THE DIPSOMANIAC.

BY DR. DANIEL CLARK,

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(Read before the Students' Medical Society of the Medical Department of Toronto University.)

The best remedy for alcoholic drunkenness is not under discussion. Moral suasion, total prohibition, local option, and their relative merits towards the suppression of this evil are being discussed by abler pens than mine. All, or any of these remedies, have been, so far, only partially successful. The dire effects of drunkenness are to-day seen on every hand. Drunkards are neither "few nor far between." This unfortunate class has our pity, but mere compassion is of little moment unless it can take a practical shape. Essays on alcohol and on its physiological effects in the human system have little power to reclaim an old toper. Moral tracts on the sin of this excess are mostly thrown away on the confirmed inebriate. Sermons depicting the future fate of such are practically useless. He cares next to nothing for his present or future fate with a burning thirst for spirits upon him. Caricature may do its worst; imitation of his stupid antics and frolics may adorn the speech of the temperance lecturer, and set his audience in a roar of mirth; starvation and rags, filth and physical distress, scorn and ostracism, all have no effect on the

majority of the pitiful victims of alcoholism. Nothing short of a miracle, or a Divine dispensation, can save a vast majority of those from their morbid and debasing appetite, if left to themselves. The few are saved by well-meaning philanthropists, but the many are lost to themselves and society. It is, therefore, a social problem, involving tremendous interests, how to save these weaklings of humanity.

The writer may be permitted to divide the drunkards into four classes.

1st. Those who become drunkards from a habit of tipling.

2nd. Those who become drunkards from drinking to relieve nervous prostration, or to drown sorrow or worry.

3rd. Those who drink to excess because of a hereditary tendency to thirst after some stimulant or sedative, arising from nerve and brain susceptibility or depreciation.

4th. Those who become drunkards because of some injury to the brain, spinal cord, sunstroke, or great nervous shock of any kind. The nature becomes changed as well as the character, because of any of these afflictions. They influence the whole man for evil, and that without a truce.

Those who become drunkards from habitual imbibing are usually of three kinds.

(a) The weak-willed who cannot resist the temptation to imitate others in a drinking bout, or who may think it manly to toss off the glass with boon companions.

(b) The genial, jolly, companionable fellow,