

cure, to have survived and flourished in spite of having been shown long ago to be unworthy of consideration, though the fact has evidently escaped the attention of the British Medical Association. I find in the report of the Departmental Parliamentary Committee on Inebriates for 1895, under the heading "Secret Cures," an account of a fair trial made by a committee appointed by the Good Templars of Dundee, under the superintendence of Dr. Tyson's London agent: "Nineteen patients went through the twenty-one-days course. The result at first seemed very satisfactory, and the committee reported on 2nd February 'that the statements made by Dr. Tyson up to the close of the treatment were fully justified.' The committee followed up the cases. By the 11th of October, or eight months and a half after the conclusion of the treatment, all but four had relapsed into their old habits. Of the fifteen who had done so, however, it was asserted 'that in no case had the lapses been due to a return of the craving.' They had all resumed drinking because they wanted to join their old friends." The parliamentary committee reported, "Everything we have heard leads us to believe that no reliance whatever is to be placed upon these secret cures, which in our opinion are absolutely worthless." In spite of this report it appears that some forty thousand persons have been treated by the Tyson cure.

In the British Medical Association's report special stress is laid upon the absence of anything worthy of the name of statistics. Claim is laid to curing from 80 to 90 per cent. of patients, but this is supported merely by "testimony of cure" offered by particular individuals, without any evidence as to numbers. There is no reason whatever to doubt the sincerity or genuineness of the testimony so far as it goes; but the extraordinary fact is that it should be accepted by any one as having any weight in supporting generalised statistics. In the article I have already quoted by Canon Fleming appears the following: "But the most interesting part of my committee-work comes when it is time to hold the annual meeting, and when ladies and gentlemen who have been through the treatment assemble before a small Board 'to testify.' It is like one of those missionary meetings at which converts come forward to declare their conversion." Before the days when the treatment of alcoholism had become the happy hunting-ground of the quack, it would have been quite easy in any town in New Zealand to pick out several genuine cases of men who, after having been heavy drinkers for a number of years, had managed to master their failing. It would be strange, indeed, if among the half-million drinkers who are alleged to have tried to give up their habit, and sought the aid of the Keeley nostrum in the Northern Hemisphere, there could not be found a considerable number who had succeeded.

Some years ago a wave of "specific treatment" for inebriety passed over this colony, and a large number of persons submitted themselves to be cured. A considerable number of the patients sent to Orokonui had been so treated, and I know from them and from reliable medical testimony how very few throughout the whole country kept well after the first year. Dr. Colquhoun, the lecturer on the Practice of Medicine in our University, who has given special attention to the subject of inebriety, informed me a year ago that out of the large number of patients treated in Dunedin there was, so far as he could ascertain, only one patient who had not relapsed.

The aspect of the treatment of inebriety upon which I have been dwelling would be of comparatively little practical importance, so far as the Government institution is concerned, were it not for the fact that, as I have already stated, public opinion has been almost entirely built, directly or indirectly, upon misleading statements of advertising quacks. We have to contend against the degenerate credulity of the day, the tendency to unreasoningly welcome anything that may happen to be new, without pausing to inquire whether it be good or even possible. As Max Nordau says, "There is a sound of rending in every tradition . . . Views that have hitherto governed minds are dead . . . Where a market vendor sets up his booth and claims to give an answer, where a fool or a knave suddenly begins to prophesy in verse or prose, in sound or colour, or professes to practise his art otherwise than his predecessors or competitors, there gathers a great concourse."

Every short cut to salvation for drunkards, if loudly enough proclaimed, is thoughtlessly welcomed by thousands. The body and soul of man have been lowered, in the popular conception, to the level of a test-tube and its contents in the hands of a chemist; and humanity has brought itself to believe that the mind and the will can be strengthened and extended by the direct and specific action of drugs upon the cells of the brain. We have every reason to believe that this will never be the case, that "evolution while you wait" will never be available at the bidding of any charlatan. We may be thankful that there is still some room for human choice and effort, that the "Pilgrim's Progress" is not entirely obsolete. As Dr. Urquhart says,\* "The latest dictate of science is in confirmation of the wisdom of the ages. If we grant that the will traverses the cells and fibres of the brain along paths that are capable of auto-development, and that normal man is so endowed with mental powers as to be in truth 'the captain of his soul,' verily it is our duty to avoid ignoble thought, and to entertain high purposes. . . . Not least upon us is laid the apostolic injunction to think on those things which are of good report. Perennial is the command; perennial are the rewards, written large upon individual character, and upon the lives of those intrusted to our care."

This, surely, is the point of view which we should impress upon our inebriate patients—that their ultimate redemption from vice and disease must rest largely with themselves, and that while in the Home they must be equipping themselves in body, mind, and morals for an outside environment full of pitfalls and temptations. As physicians, we are called upon to restore them to as perfect health as our powers and resources can insure, and to give them the best advice and counsel as to the conduct of life while under our immediate care and after leaving the institution. These things we have endeavoured to do throughout, but we have found a great stumbling-block in the convictions which have been formed by the majority of the patients before they reach us. They say, "Give

\* The Presidential Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association, July, 1898, by A. R. Urquhart, M.D., F.R.C.P.E.