

*Legislation for Inebriates.*

In his annual report for last year, Dr. Langden, superintendent of the Longview Asylum, in the State of Ohio, thus expresses his sense of the urgent need of legislative control over habitual drunkards:—

I desire also to again renew my suggestion with regard to the propriety of some legislation in behalf of those suffering from the effects of an inordinate appetite for strong drink. I am the more urgent in my desire for something to be done for this class of patients, as I have been, and still am, in the receipt of so many requests from both friends and the patients themselves for admission to our asylum, or for some other relief beyond moral suasion, remonstrance of friends, prayers and entreaties of relatives, and such other means as are now available. None but those who have charge of such an institution have any idea of the number and earnestness of these requests. The amount of evil and suffering that might be saved by appropriate measures taken for the relief of these unfortunate ones, can scarcely be realised. Many of these requests are in behalf of some of both sexes, of the best and brightest intellects, great acquirements, highest social position and greatest usefulness in the community. So common is it to have these requests come from this class, that it seems as though this vice was most prevalent among those who appear most protected from, and least liable to it.

Aside from the benefit to the individuals themselves who are suffering from this evil, and to their immediate friends and relatives, the removal of a bad moral example from the community, the prevention of waste of means and squandering of estates, and even the prevention of the greatest crimes, all call for some effort stronger and more efficient than has yet been made, to rescue these unhappy victims from their besetting sin. I will not say *exactly* what should, or ought to be done, but I am convinced by an experience of years, that the enactment of a judicious law for the benefit of inebriates, would result in as much good as the best and most efficient of our asylums for the insane.

We observe that Mr. Dalrymple has brought this important subject before the House of Commons, and we regret that his exertions to obtain some suitable legislative provision did not meet with due support. In Belgium, we believe, a drunkard may be put under restraint, by going before a magistrate and signing a declaration that he is willing to be put under control for a certain fixed time. Until that time has expired, he cannot discharge himself; he can only be discharged by the authorities of the asylum, who may do so if they think him well enough.