

Sir James Crichton-Browne in his eloquent speech reminds us that he first attacked the problem of tuberculosis in asylums in 1883. In the intervening years much knowledge has accumulated, and the scientific position has been fortified till it is now impregnable. It is not sufficient for us, however, to hold that position. The country is astir with hopes of relief from the intolerable assaults of a wide-spread and deadly foe. Now is the time to range ourselves with those who have already entered on a vigorous campaign, with the augury of a successful issue.

---

*Pensions.*

We are informed that the Parliamentary Committee has followed up the ideas expressed at the Annual Meeting, in the discussion of the report it then brought up. A communication has been sent to the County Councils Association, and is receiving attention at the hands of that important body. We know that the Lord Chancellor is in favour of a pension scheme, and if a satisfactory one can be arranged with the County Councils Association, we may look forward to the time when asylum authorities can go into the employment market with offers of pecuniary conditions equal to those now made by other services. We cannot too urgently ask each superintendent to furnish any information required for the guidance and assistance of the Parliamentary Committee.

---

*The Sale of Intoxicating Liquors.*

The final Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the operation and administration of the laws relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors is now published, and contains much that is of interest to the members of our specialty, who probably see more of the extreme evils of intemperance than any other class of the medical profession. We can, however, allude only to a few of the more important of the many far-reaching suggestions contained in the Report.

“Simple drunkenness,” apart from disorder, the Commission proposes “should be liable to arrest.” Their recommendation,

by making this condition practically a crime, will probably do more for the cause of temperance than all the other suggested legislation. Our people are so law-abiding that this view of drunkenness, it may be predicted, will soon be generally adopted, with satisfactory results. It is well to recall that not so long ago it was regarded as the "duty" of a gentleman to get drunk after dinner; but now that "society" regards intoxication as disgraceful the habit is abandoned. In the lower classes of the present day drunkenness is widely regarded as rather a fine thing, certainly not as a matter to be ashamed of. If they can be brought to view it as criminal and disgraceful, a similar change of habit will doubtlessly follow.

The "*particeps criminis*" must logically be held responsible for his share in the offence, and the Report is consistent in recommending that "licence-holders" should be called upon to show that they did not know of a drunken person "being upon" or "leaving their premises." This, again, is an important step in the right direction.

"Habitual drunkards," it is further recommended, should be placed on a black list, and the licence-holders of the district in which such drunkards reside should be warned by the police not to serve such persons under penalty; also, that the persons prohibited should be liable to penalties for attempting to evade the prohibition. Although there are obvious difficulties in carrying out this proposal, it would, without doubt, have beneficial results, even with limitations.

"Habitual drunkenness," the Report recommends, should be treated as "persistent cruelty," entitling the wife or husband to separation and protection for herself, or himself, and children. This, if it becomes law, will save an immense amount of unmerited suffering, from which at present there is no legal escape.

The initiation of investigation in regard to habitual drunkenness before a magistrate, on the action of a member of the drunkard's family, which is also proposed, though open to abuse, could probably be made a useful and workable provision.

The Habitual Drunkards Act, at present badly halting in its progress, by the aid of these and many similar recommendations would be greatly helped in its beneficial results.

Incipient habitual drunkards would by these provisions be brought under the operation of the Act at a stage when the hope

of cure would be greatest, and the time required for treatment at its lowest limit.

The "van system," in connection with "grocers' licences" in Scotland, appears to be the most pernicious custom in the sale of intoxicating liquors. The van may be briefly described as a perambulating drink-shop, combined with the worst evils of the tally-shop. The system is a most pernicious and insidious incitement—not only to drink, but to debt.

The Commission recommends that these vans should be liable to search ; that the drivers must produce when called on signed orders from customers, must carry no liquor beyond that in supply of such orders, and that each order should bear the name and address of the sender. These regulations it is to be feared are too easy of evasion, nor do they touch the worst feature of the system—the debt. We would suggest that all transactions under van system should be for cash, and that there should be no recovery for debt thus contracted.

The Report concludes by urging that licensed houses should be greatly reduced in number, and by asserting that, "while no claim to compensation can be urged by those who lose their licences, some allowance might be made as a matter of grace, which, however, should be raised, not from public rates or taxes, but from the trade itself."

Statistics of great value and importance in regard to the consumption of liquor in this and other countries (especially in Norway and Sweden), of cases of drunkenness, of deaths from alcoholic causes, etc., are given in an appended memorandum by Mr. Whittaker.

The Report, indeed, contains a large amount of information on the drink question, and should be studied by all interested.

The Medico-Psychological Association as a body, moreover, should note the fact that the Commission does not seem to have troubled itself with statistics in regard to the share of intoxicants in the production of mental disease.

---

*London Lunacy.*

The tenth annual Report of the Asylums Committee of the London County Council has now attained very closely to the