THE NATIONAL TEMPERANCE LEAGUE.

ADDRESS BY MRS. MARY SCHARLIEB, M.D., M.S.

ON conclusion of the breakfast given by the National Temperance League at Brighton on July 24th, under the chairmanship of Dr. AINSLIE HOLLIS, an address on the subject of the responsibility of medical men in regard to temperance among child-bearing women was delivered by Mrs. SCHARLIEB.

One of the heaviest responsibilities of doctors, she said, was that of fostering the moral well-being among those who put themselves under their care, and this responsibility was greatest of all when such patients were actual or prospective mothers. On the health of their bodies and the integrity of their moral and spiritual nature depended not only the welfare of their children and their homes, but the more important extension of the family, which was known as the nation. The huge outlay of the nation on alcohol was in any case regrettable, and it was among the women of the nation that the effect of alcohol consumption was most serious. It was said that among women the habit of drinking had greatly increased, and on no class of women did the penalty of alcohol fall with such disastrous results as on those of child-bearing age. Nor was it only the women that were evilly affected. It was said that every individual came into the world with his fate written on his forehead, and that virtually his fortune, whether good or bad, was settled before he attained independent existence. It was useless to inquire how far back extended the influences which made a man what he was and what he would be, but it was perfectly certain that those influences were intensified and became potent during his pre-natal existence. Frequently the embryo offspring of alcoholic parents died *in utero*, while the children who were born alive had to contend against two sets of deteriorating influences; they started life with badly nourished tissues and poor constitutions, and owing to the deficiency in suckling power exhibited by alcoholic mothers they had to be brought up by hand. Medical men knew that alcohol was just as much a poison as opium, strychnine, or arsenic, and this being the case ought they not to use their undoubtedly great influence over the child-bearing women of the country to induce them to take things that were profitable to them and to abstain from such things as alcohol, which could not but be deleterious? During three months of pregnancy even the strongest women had their constitutions strained to the utmost, and the medical profession should make it its special duty to protect them from the evil advice of foolish mothers and grandmothers and other Sarah Gampes of that sort who were prone to suggest a "little drop of brandy." The infant mortality had not fallen in the same ratio as the adult death-rate, and among the causes which accounted for this fact must be included the frequency with which mothers were of alcoholic habits.

According to the researches of W. C. Sullivan, 55 per cent. of the children of alcoholic women were either still-born or died before attaining their second year. Furthermore, of those who survived infancy, from 12 to 15 per cent. became epileptic, and many more showed that peculiar defect of brain and nerve power which accounted for the army of mental defectives. Comparatively little could be done towards effective teaching of habits of temperance, prudence, and thrift to women who were already grown up and had formed habits of intemperance, but the majority of young people under 20 years of age did not drink, and much might be done by careful instruction both in schools and in public lectures and addresses to point out the advantage of sobriety. Positive rather than negative teaching was desirable, stress being laid not on the terrors of the police-court and other miserable results of intemperance, but on the beauty of temperance and its happy results in healthy bodies. The passion of the young for cinematograph exhibitions could be turned to advantage by teaching them to admire endurance and heroism, and making it clear that people who have shattered their nerves by indulgence in alcohol were necessarily incapable of great feats of this kind. In the past false standards had been set up for admiration and imitation. Many of the songs of the nation were in praise of wine, and

the figure of John Bull which was put forward as a representation of the national spirit surely did not represent the highest type to which the nation should aspire. In some respects medical men had wider opportunities of bringing influence to bear than any one else, but in order to exert it in the right direction they must be fully persuaded in their own minds as to the advantages and even the necessity of temperance, as well as set a good example themselves. They must also be prepared to take a certain amount of trouble to put themselves in a position to give a reason for their faith by studying the results of the researches of laboratory investigators in regard to the influence of alcohol on various forms of vegetable and animal life and on mental processes. They should also have some knowledge of the laws of economics, and of the part that alcohol had played in the deterioration of the race and of its power to swell the death-rate and to create criminals, lunatics, and imbeciles. They should also be students of history, studying the campaigns of Wellington and other commanders, and noting the influences that alcohol had had on some who would otherwise have been among the bravest and wisest of mankind. Above all, they must recognize that a right system of education, combined with a sure faith, fervent hope, and never-failing charity, would suffice to save the country from an age-long reproach and from an insidious poison which was sapping her vitals.

At the conclusion of the address a vote of thanks to Dr. Scharlieb and the Chairman was moved by Dr. NEWSHOLME, who said that it was indeed true that the responsibility of medical men towards the child was heavy, but it had been still heavier in the past. The medical views of one decade were the popular views of the next, and medical men should now show that alcohol was not necessary or even suitable for ordinary dietetic purposes, and that mankind was better without it.

LITERARY NOTES.

THE Cambridge University Press is about to publish a book on *The State Provision of Sanatoriums*, by Dr. S. V. Pearson, of the Sanatorium, Mundesley. The author deals from a practical point of view with the complicated questions involved in the State provision of these institutions, and also indicates what is being done in this direction in Germany, Norway, the United States, and Hungary, as well as in this country.

An interesting article might be written on the influence of the motor in modern life. It would be out of place here to discuss the part it has played and continues to play in fanning the flame of class hatred set aglow by incendiary declamation, or the increased facilities which, as Lombroso foretold, it affords for crime. But it may be said that the motor has already brought into existence a vocabulary of its own which is gradually filtering into ordinary speech. An amusing proof of this was given in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of August 5th, where in the list of general addresses to be delivered before the International Congress of Medicine Professor "Chauffeur" appeared as the orator on medicine!

At a meeting of the French Society of the History of Medicine, a brief report of which was published in the *Gazette Médicale de Strasbourg* for June, 1913, Dr. Georges Hervé communicated some pages of reminiscences, not intended for publication, by Dr. Kaempffen, who, born at Brigues in the Valais in 1784, served as a military surgeon during the wars of the First Empire, and was attached under the Restoration to the Seventh Regiment of Infantry of the Royal Guard, then practised medicine in Paris till his death, which occurred in 1856. The extracts relate to Kaempffen's medical studies, and show what the teaching of medicine at Vienna was in the first years of the nineteenth century. Professor Letulle read and commented on some manuscript notes of Laënnec relating to morbid anatomy. He said he thought it was, perhaps, not without regret that Laënnec, after his discovery of auscultation, gave up the study of morbid anatomy in 1816 to devote himself wholly to clinical medicine.