with other patients, some of whom are sure to be promising cases for recovery, is doubtless fundamentally due to reasons of economy. That is to say, there is often hesitation in laying before committees plans for the erection of a special ward for phthisical cases, the provision of which would entail increased expense, in the way of addition to the nursing staff and arrangements for extra sick nursing. It is to be hoped that the governing bodies of asylums may be brought to participate in the enlightenment of the public, now in progress, in respect to the means by which phthisis is spread, and by which the risk of infection is reduced. Asylum physicians will then make their recommendations on segregation with more confidence of a practical issue thereto.

The Psychological Section at the Edinburgh Meeting.

Adequate notice of this meeting was unfortunately crowded out from the October number of the JOURNAL,—it is unnecessary to say from no want of interest or value, as the reports in the present number will testify.

Sir John Batty Tuke's address on the "Modern Conception of the Etiology of Insanity" was conceived on the most advanced lines of thought, with the scientific insight and practical suggestiveness which we are accustomed to expect from him.

The more thorough appreciation of the causes and of the pathology of insanity, certainly justifies the hope expressed by Sir John, that considerable improvement in the treatment of the insane will result at no distant date. This, as he suggests, will especially follow on the improved medical care in the earliest stages of disorder, by the wider appreciation of these conditions by the general body of the profession. We heartily join him also in condemning the delays in treatment under the English law, but we cannot hope that there will soon be any improvement in this respect; progress in this direction is certainly not within the range of practical probabilities at present.

Drunken Women.

The Liquor Commission has drawn from an eminent surgeon the remarkable statement that female drunkenness, in his ex-

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perience, had been traced almost without exception to physical and mental suffering. Generalisation from special experience is always apt to be misleading, and this is probably an exceptionally striking instance of the untrustworthiness of one-sided views.

Neurologists and alienists, in the class of cases coming to them, might similarly say that female drunkenness was in large measure due to neuropathic or insane heredity; the general physician, especially in towns, would probably ascribe a large proportion to the *tædium vitæ* and want of interests or occupation amongst the women of the middle class; whilst the prison surgeon would probably find the predominant cause in prostitution and irregular habits of life.

The fact of such a sweeping generalisation can only, therefore, be taken as an evidence of the very strictly limited class of cases on which the observation was made.

That treatment of drunken women in inebriate homes is "fundamentally wrong," as this hasty generaliser asserts, must certainly need the qualification "in regard to those who require other, possibly surgical, treatment." Even with this qualification the assertion is erroneous, for the inebriate habit when once fully established will often endure after the original cause has long ceased to exist or operate. Total deprivation is, in the experience of most physicians, a fundamental necessity of cure when cases have reached this condition from whatever cause; and the diminution of the facilities of obtaining drink, which this confident writer apparently does not consider important, is by common experience proved to be of essential value.

Conclusions based on inadequate or one-sided experience, if sufficiently, strikingly, and boldly put, are very attractive to the public mind, and so constitute a real danger in questions which have ultimately to be decided by public opinion. The small modicum of truth renders the error still more pernicious by rendering the falsity more easily acceptable.

Flimsily constructed conclusions such as these cannot be too forcibly reprobated, or the habit of making them too much discouraged; this habit, to borrow an expression from the building trade, might be appropriately stigmatised as "jerry generalisation."

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