

The Treatment of Inebriates.

MEDICAL experts in the treatment of insane persons have for many years protested against the inhumanity of efforts to cure dipsomaniacs and confirmed inebriates by fines and imprisonment.

We now have almost literally no discrimination in our treatment of persons arrested for being drunk. The lad arrested for the first time and the old "rounder" who faces the court for the hundredth time are served alike. A fine is imposed; if not paid, they are sent to work it out in the correctional institution. In a few cases where friends of means and influence interest themselves the inebriate is treated in a private asylum for inebriates, or some lunatic hospital; but the great body are all classed together: fine follows fine, and imprisonment follows imprisonment, and the man or woman who enters upon the career by a first arrest seems bound to continue in it until the community and the victim are both relieved by the drunkard's death.

Nearly all medical testimony is to the effect that a certain class of inebriates have passed the point where their inebriety is a vice or a crime, if it is ever so, and reached a condition of disease which they can no more control than the typhoid-fever patient can control his fever. This class needs curative and reformatory treatment; for such we should have special hospitals to treat such cases and no other. Persons of this class are never properly sent to correctional institutions, either for longer or shorter periods; neither should they be sent for treatment to lunatic hospitals or insane asylums.

All persons arrested for drunkenness should be detained before trial long enough to make a complete investigation of their antecedents. If found to belong to the dipsomaniac class, they should be sent to the hospital especially provided for the cure of that disease; if arrested for the first time, and it appears that they are regularly employed, they should be allowed to go free as soon as they have become sober, with an admonition not to be arrested again; for a second offense a little longer detention should be inflicted, and some effort should be made to place the person under the restraint of some friends or of a probation officer; for a third offense, within three years, the defendant should be committed to an institution where he could be compelled to labor for a period of at least three months. Such institution should have officers fitted to bring moral influence to bear upon the inmates, to build up their will-power, that they may be able to withstand temptation when released.

For those who have been committed more than five times within three years a sentence of not less than two years should be imposed, to still another institution, where labor and mental and moral discipline are rigidly enforced. For the hardened offenders who spend eleven months out of every twelve in our institutions, who are never sober for more than a few days at a time, there should be no question about shutting them up for long terms, instead of arriving at a similar result by a dozen different arrests and convictions in a single year as now. By putting this class away for long terms society will protect itself in many ways: it will relieve itself from the danger which their presence in the community threatens; the assaults, breaches of the peace, thefts, burglaries, and murders they may commit would be prevented, society would be saved from their tainted offspring, and the tax-payers would save the

considerable difference between their treatment upon this plan and under the present system.

The writer is not a medical expert, but is situated so as to be a constant observer of the working of the present system of treating drunkards in one of our larger cities, and feels no hesitation in saying that he believes if the authorities were to endeavor to invent a scheme for permanently destroying the usefulness of every person who happens to be arrested for drunkenness for the first time, they would labor long before they could improve upon our present system.

L. Edwin Dudley.

"The Confederate Diplomats."

A DENIAL FROM MR. EDWIN DE LEON.

WE have received from Mr. Edwin De Leon indignant denial of the statements concerning him in the following paragraph from Mr. Bigelow's article on "The Confederate Diplomats" in our May number:

He was regarded by Slidell from the first rather as a spy upon him than as an auxiliary, and that they would not get on harmoniously together needed no prophet to foresee. Besides, De Leon's curiosity got the better of his judgment, and he fell into the habit of opening Slidell's despatches, a practice eminently fitted to strain the relations between these "high concocting powers."

Mr. De Leon says: "I distinctly pronounce both these assertions to be as untrue as they are insulting. Of the former, Mr. Bigelow never had an opportunity of judging, and my earlier relations with Mr. Slidell were, for nearly two years, of the most friendly character. My intercepted despatches, published in a New York journal, then caused a coolness between us."

With regard to the second charge, that he "fell into the habit of opening Slidell's despatches," Mr. De Leon declares it to be "as absurd and impossible as it is untrue," and says: "To support it, Mr. Bigelow cites, from what purports to be a despatch from Benjamin to Slidell, such an allegation, which he (Benjamin) refers to as having been made by Slidell to him at that time—twenty-seven years ago. I declare, upon my honor, that there never was the shadow of such a suspicion attaching to me, as far as I have known, up to the moment of reading this alleged despatch of Benjamin's and Mr. Bigelow's comments thereon; and that each and all of these are slanderous and false." EDITOR.

The Steamboat "Ariel."—A Correction.

ON the first page of the June CENTURY, in the article on "Colonel William Byrd of Westover, Virginia," there was mention of the steamboat *Ariel* which plies between Richmond and Norfolk. As some of our readers might infer from the allusions that the steamer was perhaps not entitled to the public confidence, we take pleasure in saying that since the appearance of the June CENTURY, the annual inspection certificate of the *Ariel* being about to expire, the United States steamboat inspectors, as required by law, made a "thorough examination of the *Ariel's* hull, boiler, engine, and life-saving equipment, and found all the requirements of the law complied with, and that the *Ariel* was in good and safe condition in every department. The inspectors thereupon issued their certificate accordingly, which is her official passport for another year from date." EDITOR.