

public . . . but also advance the sobriety of the nation, which the Trade is as eager to promote as the most ardent true temperance reformer.”*

The question which especially interests us is the statement that improved public houses will “advance the sobriety of the nation.” Is this true or untrue? Ardent temperance advocates are convinced that it is untrue. They point out† that a great reduction in the consumption of liquor is not likely to come about to any large extent by increased temperance among confirmed drinkers. It can only be achieved by protecting the rising generation from becoming habitual users of drink. They ask if it is wise to sanction the association of amusements and music, which have such a strong appeal to young people, with the public house and with drinking. On the other hand, it must be admitted that, as a man has a perfect right to visit a public house, he has also a right to find decent accommodation and amenities. Inevitably his outlook on life is dependent to a large extent on his surroundings, and if the public house is clean, airy, and comfortable, with adequate seating and sanitary accommodation, it is bound to raise his self-respect, and to make him realise more fully than he otherwise would the enormity of drinking to excess. If, in consequence of the better conditions, he brings his wife with him to the public house, he is less likely to drink to excess than in her absence. It seems to me, therefore, that as long as public houses exist at all in this country, they ought to be of a much better type than those usually met with. The argument of the temperance advocate

* “Alliance Year Book,” 1927, p. 128.

† *Loc. cit.*, p. 124.