

of our distillers take away the fusil oil from the whisky by a direct process, and the Government, I believe, gives them a rebate on that as it is destroyed. When that is done, there is no necessity for the keeping of the whisky for two years. But where the whisky is properly made—and I use the term “properly made” advisedly—where the fermented liquor is simply distilled, and all the different alcohols are allowed to pass over with the fusil oil, and the whole is then allowed to mature in the wood until the fusil oil gradually breaks up of its own accord into the different ethers; in that way you get a natural spirit blended in such a way that it is impossible to imitate it by any quick direct method, such as taking the silent spirits and adding the ethers. But to get such a result, it is absolutely necessary to allow the liquor to mature for two or three years. Under such circumstances, the two years limit would be a very beneficial and wise arrangement.

12467*a*. Then the two years limit is really in the interest of the consumer?—It is really in the interest of the consumer of a naturally blended whisky, undoubtedly.

12468*a*. Does the individual constitution have anything to do with the quantity that may be safely taken?—Oh, yes.

12469*a*. Of any of these beverages?—Of any of these beverages. In my own case, for instance, I find that it is impossible to take one glass of American lager, while a friend of mine can take three or four comfortably, and relish them.

12470*a*. I think that you have told us that even the constitution of a total abstainer becomes possessed by a certain quantity of alcohol by a natural process?—Yes. Alcohol is a natural substance, caused by the breaking up of starch or sugar, and its passage into carbon dioxide. It is the halfway point.

12471*a*. It is, I suppose, an undoubted fact that those who have conducted arctic explorations, and those who have commanded British military expeditions into torrid countries, have favoured total abstinence on the part of the men under their command. To what do you attribute that?—I am not aware that they have had total abstinence. I know of no expedition that has been conducted on what we mean by total abstinence. Even in the Egyptian campaign under General Wolseley, moderate rations of alcoholic liquors were served out to the men after a fatiguing day. But, in these cases, the alcohol was never put between the men and their work; it was after the fatigue was over, that the beneficial results of it were noticed. Dr. Parkes conducted a series of very lengthy experiments on this point during the Ashantee campaign. He noticed—and he was a man who, if anything, leaned towards teetotalism—that when alcohol was served out to the soldiers at the beginning of the day, little or no benefit resulted; in fact, if anything, it was detrimental; but at the close of the day's work, when the men were fatigued and tired, too tired almost to eat, a moderate ration of spirits proved, on the whole, beneficial. In the case of Arctic explorers, spirits have been used both moderately and immoderately. Wherever they have not been used with great caution, disastrous effects have undoubtedly been noticed. That is due to the very rapid oxidation of alcohol in those latitudes, where the heavier fats are, in general, far more beneficial.

12472*a*. Do you remember whether the experience in the Arctic explorations was that persons who did not take spirits at all could stand the cold better than those who took them even to a moderate degree?—Undoubtedly, in issuing out it is very dangerous to take spirits; but in coming in from the cold into the huts or cabins, where the temperature was considerably higher than the outdoor temperature, they found that a moderate dose of spirits tended to relieve the congestion and acted as a safeguard against pulmonary affections.

12473*a*. In the use of intoxicants as beverages, is there any difference whether they are taken with a meal or taken by themselves?—There is a marked distinction, even in the case of wine or beer. It is not well to drink much between meals, although I would not set too great store by that. In the case of spirits or the heavier wines, notably the sherris, the best time to take them is at a meal time—not previously, but during or after the meal. On the continent of Europe, especially among the French, the habit prevails of taking a glass of champagne previous to dinner, which is possibly the best time to take it.

12474*a*. Speaking of France, it has been stated that of late years there has been an increase of intemperance in the northern part of that country; and by some it is contended that this is an outcome of the drinking of light wines by which a taste has been

CHARLES GORDON RICHARDSON.