

peutic value that its advocates claim for it—surely these questions would have been settled long ago.

The proper way to fix the value or no value of alcohol as a food or as a medicine would be to find out what the organism does with it, and what it does to the organism, when it is introduced into the circulation. If this action and reaction could be determined with certainty, the answer to the previous questions would follow without further trouble. Unfortunately, it has been found impossible to answer these questions with any certainty. There is no doubt that when alcohol is drunk in large quantities, the organism having at that time no need, in consequence of some exceptional condition, for these large quantities, there is no doubt, I say, that then a very large part of the alcohol leaves the body as it entered it, in the form of alcohol. Not having been altered chemically, and not being like water a constituent of the organism, it could not in this case have fulfilled the functions of a food, and if no medicine was needed at the time it could have done no good as a medicine; it seems clear then that in the case supposed, alcohol, however little harm it might do, could do no good. But there are other circumstances in which the problem is not by any means so simple, circumstances of exhaustion and disease, in which it is not at all clear to me that the alcohol, or some of it, is not oxidised in the body, and though it cannot supply tissue yet supplies force to the organism. It has been argued that alcohol is a food, because it is said those who habitually use it eat less than do those who do not use it. I believe this last is true, but I do not believe that the inference drawn from this fact is a correct