

from which arise disordered conditions of the blood, then diseased kidneys, diseased nervous system, or gout, or diseased heart. . . . I hardly know any more potent cause of disease than alcohol.' Sir William said in the higher classes there is great temperance, more abstinence than in the middle classes. He could not, from his own experience, assert that drinking among women was increasing, Drinking between meals he condemned absolutely as 'most injurious'; also 'the eleven o'clock beer' of servants, remarking that domestic male servants are amongst the most unhealthy classes of the population, only to be cured by abstinence and purging. He magnified water as 'of all dilutents and solvents of food' the best. On the question of restraint he spoke diffidently. He distinguished carefully between a habitual drunkard and a dipsomaniac, heredity attaching not to mere drunkenness, but to mental defect leading to it. He advocated punishing a mere drunkard, and doing it early. He would publish the name of a man found drunk, and if found a second or more times, he would put the number of times opposite his name for public reprobation, although quite aware that society would not at present agree with him in this. Sir William Gull is of opinion that the whole question of drunkenness cannot be dealt with by Legislation, but must be dealt with by society at large, by a better knowledge of the disadvantage of stimulants, and by a better moral condition of the whole of society.

We feel thankful to the medical witnesses already examined by the Lord's Committee for the masterly and clear way in which they have spoken. They all express what we believe to be the very general view of the profession, that alcohol as a medicine is indispensable, if not undesirable. Sir William Gull's evidence may seem to strongly biased against the customary ways of taking alcohol, but if considered carefully and as a whole, it must be admitted to be an admirable statement of the views of the best practitioners. We should recommend temperance societies to distribute broadcast the medical evidence, and especially that of Sir William Gull. It will be all the more influential for not going the whole length of 'teetotalers,' though we gather that Sir William in his personal habits is not much at variance with them. But the warning that he gives of the number of respectable people 'not intemperate,' that are dying day by day of alcohol, comes from a large experience, and cannot be disregarded. We entirely endorse his opinion on this point. Practically the question, from a physiological and medical view, is settled. We cannot dispense with alcohol in medicine. There are medical men, indeed, who believe otherwise, and who maintain that disease, even fevers, are better treated without alcohol. We shall hear more of this doctrine; but, in the meantime, practically alcohol is regarded by nine men out of ten as a most valuable medicine to be used with discrimination. But the time has fully come when any medical man prescribing it carelessly or indiscriminately will be blamed by the general judgment of the profession, both from an ethical and a scientific point of view.