

Dominion Medical Monthly

And Ontario Medical Journal

Vol. XLIV.

TORONTO, MARCH, 1915

No. 3

Original Articles

THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AND THE INEBRIATE

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No more important State problem presents itself to-day than the conservation, in every direction, of the morality, the health, and the lives of the people. As a causative factor in producing immorality, ill-health, and much needless loss of life, the consumption of alcohol as a beverage plays a conspicuous part.

Who knows better than the physician the harmfulness of the abuse of alcoholic beverages? He has seen or knows all the pathological effects in the various organs of the human body. He has attended the acute and the chronic alcoholic. His is the best knowledge of its baneful influence in spreading the social diseases; his the best knowledge of the part it plays in producing insanity, tuberculosis, pneumonia, Bright's disease, etc.

He knows when it acts as a sedative, a stimulant, a food, or a poison; what it has accomplished in the treatment of disease; what dose to give; what time to give it; the kind; how long to continue its administration. As with other drugs, some physicians even are never afraid to study its effects by personal experiment.

The physician knows there are some patients to whom he would not dare suggest alcohol as a medicine; others who would take it if the doctor ordered it; others, indifferently; others, gladly; still others, as the acute alcoholic, who joyfully welcome the tailing-off process.

It would appear, therefore, that in every community there are several classes into which the people can be divided as regards the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

1. The man—or woman—who is absolutely teetotal, has been, is, and always will be a total abstainer.