

of conflicting arguments merely for the sake of disproving conclusions which we at present hold to be satisfactorily established, merely, that is, for the sake of reducing ourselves to the deplorable condition of the doubting philosopher.

I.

Let us start, then, by the assumption that of all things solid or fluid which have been or can be introduced into the human system, some are beneficial and others hurtful in themselves, and apart from the question of excess, to the healthy subject. It must, of course, be postulated that *mens sana in corpore sano* is the natural and proper state of the human body. Articles uniformly noxious under such conditions may all be roughly generalised under the name of *poisons*; and to these, if we judge by their effects, alcohol undoubtedly belongs. Particular poisons, as we all know, affect particular organs; some, for instance, the brain, others the stomach, others the nerve centres. Of the effects produced, some are patent to observation on the living organism, and others can be arrived at only by *post mortem* experiments. Alcohol has a peculiar affinity for the brain, and hence its, at first, exhilarating and then stupefying effects. It is, like tobacco, a narcotic poison of the strongest kind. The following experiment may illustrate the rapidity with which alcohol when introduced into the system makes for the brain. About two ounces of alcohol was injected into the stomach of a dog, and the animal died almost instantaneously. As soon as possible after death, the brain was subjected to distillation; and a remarkable quantity of alcohol was obtained from it, more than from an equal weight of any other part of the body including the blood itself. So much for experiment. That alcohol makes for the brain of the living subject who survives the dose is evident, both in the recollection of such survivor, as soon as the appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober can be made; and also in the unchallenged truthfulness of the statement respecting any one at all the worse for liquor, that it *has got into his head*. It most assuredly has done so. *Hinc subitæ mortes atque intestina senectus*, or *juventus* as the case may be. Now the poison in question kills in various ways; by sudden shock as in many cases of apoplexy, by coma where the patient never rallies from a draught as effectual, but more painful than laudanum, and by superinduced disease of various kinds, of which delirium tremens is the form attributed by common consent to its real cause; whilst others, such as gout, dyspepsia and diseases of the liver and kidneys, especially in persons of so called temperate habits, no less surely spring, though not confessedly, from the same source. The sound mind too, no less than the sound body, succumbs to