

PREFACE

This Essay was read, in an incomplete state, before the "Dominion Medical Association" at London on the 10th of September 1879 and was published next morning in the DAILY ADVERTISER. From that paper it was reprinted twice in England. Since then it has been re-written and a good deal enlarged. I have reason to think that in its original form the Essay did a certain amount of good. It made a certain proportion of those who read it realize more clearly than they had done before the fact that alcohol, no odds in what shape used, and no odds whether used in moderate or immoderate quantities, has not the power of adding to the sum total of our comfort or happiness. That, on the contrary, in the case of the average man or woman, that is in the case of at least ninety-nine out of every hundred people, alcohol lessens the comfort, the happiness, the value of life, just in proportion to the amount of it that is taken. We all know the enormous evils that accompany and follow drunkenness, such as deterioration of the intellectual and moral natures, poverty, broken health, and premature death. It seems to be a common opinion that the agent which causes these evils is also, when differently used, the agent of great corresponding blessings to mankind; that it is capable of diminishing the ills and adding to the pleasures of life; and that the proper attitude of the sensible man towards alcohol is that of discouragement of what is called its abuse, and commendation of what is considered its legitimate and desirable use.

It is the object of this little Essay to show that this view of the matter contains a gross and glaring fallacy; that alcohol, no odds how wisely, temperately and carefully used, and no odds in what pure and delicate forms taken, has not the power