

by others not less painful if no attempt is made to get rid of the poison and establish a healthier mode of life; for the habits of the last two years, and especially of the last two months, have been of the kind described by doctors as "imprudent," and by plainer spoken people as dissipated.

The theory has been propounded lately that the Liberal Party has "exhausted its mandate," that it has lost its *raison d'être*. We would say rather that it has forgotten it. It has been acting upon the creed that the duty of an Opposition is to oppose, and their object to turn out the Government and come in themselves. The only object on the other hand, which a true Liberal could admit as a legitimate one, is the provision and maintenance of a party more enlightened, more competent, and more patriotic, than that in power; such a party as may, when opportunity offers, supersede their inferior rivals, and in the meantime rouse them to emulation in the service of the country. The first duty of such a party is to criticise from the standpoint of a well-founded ideal. It is evident that when criticism degenerates into mere opposition, when it is based on malevolence or a selfish desire for office, it is useless, and will probably be ineffective: it is also evident to most of us at this moment that at certain national crises, for instance after the actual outbreak of war, criticism should only be offered by the most competent and most responsible, and with stricter regard than ever to the subordination of all other interests to that of the common weal. The time has come for saying plainly that the criticism offered by the Liberal Party during the present war, has not passed these tests: it has been inconsistent and merely embarrassing, it has become malevolent and unscrupulous.

A charge such as this must not be directed against a whole body without discrimination: but discrimination while it frees the many, presses more heavily upon the few. The few in this case are the leaders belonging to what has been called "the main stream," and the pro-Boers.

It is futile to deny that there are both in the House of