

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD, HOME AND HUMANITY

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MEDICAL OPINION ON ALCOHOL.

Some time ago, realising the importance of understanding the action of alcohol upon the human frame, and knowing that the general public had a right to look to the medical profession for expert advice, the "Practitioner," the leading monthly Medical Journal, published a "Special Alcohol Number."

In this volume they publish articles by leading men in the profession in the Mother Country, and as the Editor says, the writers of these various articles are undoubtedly the most eminent company ever assembled within the covers of a medical journal.

Many of our White Ribboners are busy mothers of families, and comparatively few are women of leisure. Some of the articles are long, some are highly technical, but that this expert testimony should be given to our readers just at this time, we feel is very necessary.

We have not attempted to condense, but have just quoted the sentences in which these experts have given their summarised opinion upon different points. If it stimulates some to read the entire articles, they will be the gainers. The first is a short article by the Editor.

EDITORIAL.

"The subject of our present issue is one of supreme importance to civilised humanity and—as a national question—is of momentous concern to every class of the community."

"At this juncture, when the need of an authoritative exposition of the really intrinsic features of the question is felt by all thinking people who are genuinely concerned for the well-being of the present generation and the future of the race, when a fresh attempt to solve the baffling problem and discover a way to the equitable re-adjustment of their harassing political inheritance is recognised by conscientious statesmen as a responsibility which cannot long be evaded, it is essential that an arraignment of the facts be made by medical authorities who have studied the subject under all conditions."

"And the article closes thus:—

"We desire sincerely to thank our distinguished contributors—undoubtedly the most eminent company ever assembled within the covers of a medical journal."

In the following articles the extracts made are verbatim, and every writer is speaking for himself.

ALCOHOL IN MEDICINE.

(By Sir Humphrey Rolleston Bart, President Royal College of Physicians, of London.)

"Medicine, like civics, is prone to fashion; three generations ago bleeding was going out of favour to be succeeded in due course by R. B. Todd's alcoholic stimulation, which in its turn, waned long ago, as is shown by the practice and alcohol bills of the hospitals."

"From the bulk of physiological investigations on the action of alcohol, it appears that alcohol is a depressant rather than a stimulant, and that its effects are more likely to be injurious than beneficial."

"Numerous experiments prove that alcohol impairs resistance to infection."

It is not chimerical to throw out a warning that a latent craving for alcohol or a psychosis which would otherwise not have developed, may be activated by the medicinal administration of alcohol after acute disease."

"Alcoholic drinks should be employed with great caution on account of the danger of converting the individual into an addict."

THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF THE ALCOHOL PROBLEM.

(By Sir Arthur Newsholme, K.C.B., M.D., F.R.C.S.)

"The amount spent on drink in 1923 was equal to the total interest on the National Debt; it was more than the aggregate amount spent on imperial defence, education, and national health, including unemployment insurance; it was four times as much as was spent on war pensions; and more than four times as much as the aggregate amount spent on the relief of the poor, and old age pensions. The amount spent on drink, would have paid the rental of every house, farm, shop, factory and estate, in Great Britain. Evidently, then, there need be no housing problem were there is no drink problem."

"At the working years of life, 25-65, in England and Wales, 951 more men annually die among those engaged in manufacturing and retailing alcoholic drinks, than die among the same number of men otherwise occupied. Life Insurance and Friendly Society experience tells a similar story. Among abstainers the death-rate is lower at nearly every age-group than among