

CHAPTER VII

THE EFFECT OF FOOD AND OF DILUTION ON THE ACTION OF ALCOHOL

Introduction—The Influence of Food on the Alcohol Effect—The Influence of Dilution on the Alcohol Effect—Why have Dilute Alcoholic Liquids a Low Intoxicating Power?—The Steady Disappearance of Alcohol from the Blood—A Comparison of the Effects of Various Alcoholic Drinks—The Effect of Drinking Neat Spirits—A Scientific Scheme of Differential Taxation.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a matter of common knowledge that alcoholic liquors when taken on an empty stomach produce more marked subjective sensations than if they are taken with a meal or shortly after it. Until recently, however, no exact quantitative information was available, and there was no means of judging with any degree of accuracy whether the action of food is great or small, and for how long after a meal it exerts its influence. In fact, most investigators of the action of alcohol on the human organism have entirely ignored the food factor, and have omitted to mention, in their records of experiments, how long an interval elapsed between the taking of food and the consumption of the experimental dose. As far as one can guess, most observations were made in the middle of the morning or afternoon, and probably about two or three hours after the last meal. As we shall see later on, this is an unsatisfactory time to choose, for the stomach is then,