

within eighteen months drunkenness had diminished by one-half; within three years—aided by restriction of quantity—it had diminished by more than 80 per cent. on the pre-war convictions. Inefficiency and bad time-keeping diminished in equal proportion; cases of delirium tremens and illnesses proceeding from drunkenness fell with startling rapidity.

As regards the conduct of the war, that was all the situation required. But what about the post-war period? Could the measures of restriction, by which these astonishing results had been achieved, be maintained once the war was over? Probably not: almost certainly not. Was there, indeed, any permanent gain? Yes, a most notable one.

The gain consisted in this: the discovery that the drink traffic, so far from being uncontrollable, was eminently susceptible of control; that it could be regulated with precision; that definite results could be predicted with almost scientific accuracy. Contrary to previous experience—in defiance of expectation—it was found that the phenomenon intemperance could be controlled by skilful legislation; that it could be regulated—even modulated—like the tones of a violin by a virtuoso.

This fact was in itself so remarkable that its discovery should have powerfully influenced opinion on drink regulation. As a matter of fact, it has not done so, mainly because neither of the parties interested—neither the temperance party nor the drink trade—have shown any indication in their speeches that they understand what has been discovered and accomplished. Temperance reformers denounce as they denounced in 1914; trade orators reiterate their speeches of 1750.