

moderation throughout their lives, a by no means negligible fraction of them gradually acquire the habit of drinking to excess, and not having sufficient moral fibre to pull up, they drift into a condition which often ends in social disaster and premature death. He is confident that he himself will never be numbered among these degenerates, though he is not absolutely sure. In any case, the thoughtful man can scarcely help speculating occasionally whether he is entitled to indulge in what is after all a luxury, when he knows that a certain proportion of his fellows, perhaps as many as 1 in 10, are destined, sooner or later, to do themselves irreparable harm in consequence of over-indulgence. He usually decides that he is so entitled, for he is not his brother's keeper, and is not responsible for his weaknesses of the flesh. Still, out of consideration for these weaknesses, he would generally agree to submit to a certain amount of restriction on his liberty if it was calculated to reduce materially the number of these sad cases of excess. Also he is prepared to admit that, quite apart from excessive drinking, many men spend far more on alcoholic liquors than they can afford. The average non-abstaining family now spends about 13s. 6d. a week on drink, which represents a fourth or fifth of the family budget, and most men would admit that if a portion of this sum were spent on better housing, more food, and better clothes for the children, it would add materially to the health and happiness of the community. There is good reason for thinking that amongst the industrial classes the least well-paid workers spend the most on drink. In Bermondsey, for instance, which consists almost entirely of an industrial