

does the consumption of alcoholic liquors in moderation influence the duration of life, either in an adverse or a favourable sense? The answer is that, not only is there no thoroughly reliable evidence upon the point, but that it is impossible that satisfactory evidence can ever be obtained.

THE INFLUENCE OF EXCESSIVE INDULGENCE IN ALCOHOL.

It is stated by Professor Raymond Pearl* that the first person to attack the problem of the mortality of persons addicted to the immoderate use of intoxicating drinks was the distinguished actuary, F. G. P. Neison (1851). Neison's material was drawn from schedules, filled out by medical men on the basis of personal knowledge and observation of individual cases, and it related only to excessive drinkers, or so-called drunkards.

The actual number of individuals concerned was 357, and their mortality rate was found to be 3.25 times greater than that of the general population at the same ages.

The actual duration of life of drunkards of various ages, as compared with the expected duration, is shown in the following Table:

<i>Age of Drunkard.</i>			<i>Actual Duration of Life.</i>	<i>Expected Duration of Life.</i>
20 years	..	..	15½ years	44 years
30 "	..	..	14 "	36½ "
40 "	..	..	11½ "	29 "
50 "	..	..	11 "	21 "
60 "	..	..	9 "	14 "

* Cf. E. H. Starling, "The Action of Alcohol on Man," 1923, p. 229.