

relatives, and in order not to hurt their feelings, doctors are only too prone to certify some contributory causes of death as the real cause, instead of "alcoholism." This falsification is probably more frequent amongst well-to-do patients than in the poorer classes, and hence the mortality figures published by the Registrar-General, so far as they relate to alcoholism, are increasingly erroneous the higher the social status of the groups of men classified.

Evidence relating to these unattested deaths from alcoholism, and to other deaths due indirectly to excessive indulgence in alcohol, can be obtained by comparing the causes of death in typical groups of individuals liable to excessive indulgence in alcohol with other groups who are not so liable.* In order to render the comparison valid, it is essential that the groups should be men of similar social class, living under similar conditions as regards housing and general character of work (indoor or outdoor, light or heavy). The most suitable group provided by the Registrar-General is that of "inn, hotel-keepers, publicans, spirit, wine, beer-dealers," and for comparison purposes the group of "All shopkeepers." This includes men such as drapers, grocers, butchers, greengrocers, stationers, ironmongers, tobacconists, and chemists. On the left side of the Table are recorded the standardised mortalities of the two groups from diseases of the respiratory, circulatory, digestive, nervous, and urinary systems, and it will be seen that in every instance the mortality of the publicans was 1.6 to 2.0 times greater than that of the shopkeepers. From alcoholism and liver cirrhosis it was 7.8 and 6.3 times greater, whilst

* Cf. H. M. Vernon, *Brit. Journ. Inebriety*, 1924, p. 133.