AN INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON
Alcohol

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Alcohol.

This is an agent which, when considered in all its bearings, both in a medical point of view, and upon mankind in general, demands the highest considerations from the medical profession and from all those interested in the welfare of the human race. This, we hope to show at least to some extent, though necessarily imperfect, as it would occupy too much time and space to elaborate the subject thoroughly. Alcohol is not a product of nature. It is of Arabian origin. It is highly combustible, and by combustion is converted into carbonic
acid and water. Alcohol is procured from the vegetable kingdom. It is obtained from many of our most common articles of diet, and is the active ingredient of all of our wines, both foreign and domestic. It is derived from vegetable juices, by a process of fermentation. After this, being lighter than the other liquids with which it is mingled, by the application of heat, it is distilled over to itself. There are various names for it, arising from its different degree of concentration. Alcohol is a powerful solvent, and on that account is used by pharmacists for dissolving resins and
resinous articles and for preparing tinctures. On account of its active solvent power, there are numerous preparations of it in the books, and there is too great a fondness for using them. Dr. Mitchell makes the broad assertion, that the majority of drunkards are made by the doctors. We have no doubt that many are made both through the instrumentality of physicians, but cannot believe that they have committed their depredations so extensively as Dr. Mitchell asserts. However, know the liability to the establishment of a tenacious habit, perhaps rendering 


Don us help ever afterwards, an object of scorn to his fellow creatures, and blighting his prospects in life forever, every one who enters the great arena of medicine, occupying so responsible a station, should use great discrimination in the administration of this potent agent. The use of this article has been very much curtailed, owing to the many valuable contributions to the Materia Medica within the last few years, and it is to be hoped that, at no distant day, it will be entirely eradicated from the list of remedies agents.
Is alcohol directly poisonous to the human system? There are numerous well-authenticated cases of the kind upon record. It is unnecessary to cite instances of its poisonous action, as but few will have the audacity to deny it. It is absorbed into the circulation through which it exerts its poisonous influence upon the nervous centres. Some say that it acts upon the brain through the pneumogastric nerve. But this position is hardly tenable. It occasionally, when highly concentrated, produces inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach.
and towels. The first condition is treated by emetics, stimulants, epistaxis to the epigastrium and the cold douch. The last, by antiphlogistic measures, as in any other inflammation. Therapeutically.

Alcohol is used as an antiseptic for preserving anatomical preparations. It is employed in the forms of compresses for the relief of sores and burns and for assuaging local pains. It is used externally as a vasoconstrictor and refrigerant. In the former way, by a compress being saturated in it and applied to the part, and a roller bandage over the compress to prevent evaporation. As a refrigerant,
it is applied without the comprep. and roller bandage, producing by its evaporation a reduction of temperature, the patient feeling a sensible diminution of the heat of the part.

It is also a stimulant, and is administered in various forms of fever, though generally, when the system is greatly prostrated, or where the stomach is weak and of not sufficient strength to perform its functions properly. In Typhoid fever it is a most valuable agent in the state of collapse. It is given often and in small quantities at a time. Prof. Lübbig says, that alcohol unites with the oxygen in the system causing an increase of temperature. Now, in
the above disease, the patient becomes very much emaciated by the rapid combustion taking place internally, produced by the burning fever, thereby destroying the fatty matters upon which the system depends for its sustained and temperature; and alcohol, as a stimulant, to sustain the vital powers and supply the deficiency of animal heat, must be the very remedy for it. Some use it from the beginning of the disease, and this practice has proven very successful. There are many advocates for the expectant mode of treatment. But in comparing the two, the former has been found to be, by far, the most efficient. This article is also employed
On concussion of the brain, and in severe injuries to the system, to prevent it from sinking under the great depression caused by the shock. It is also used in severe surgical operations for the same purpose. But great caution should be taken, especially, in the first condition, lest it be carried too far, producing too great a reaction, which in all probability would establish inflammation of the brain. It is valuable in almost every exhausted state of the system. It is said, that when diluted with water and injected into the mouth, it cures gonorrhœa very speedily. It was thought fit by the writer to give the history, properties and therapies...
tic uses of Alcohol and show how it affects the healthful systems and to expel, or rather, disprove, some of the notions entertained by the epileptic. It cannot be possible that, if the various functions of the body work together harmoniously, alcohol, a powerful stimulant, would be beneficial by maintaining the health. According to the most scientific writers of the day, alcohol is poisonous to the healthful operations of the system, and moreover that, it renders the latter more susceptible to most diseases. But more of this as we proceed. Let us first examine some of its effects upon the main constituents of the blood. Al-
cochol will coagulate albumen. Now as physiologists admit that, albumen is transformed into fibrine by the chemical and vital changes it undergoes within the system; it is but reasonable to suppose that anything which so affects the albumen must when taken internally be injurious to the nutritive operations. We know that, by any ordinary potations, the alcohol would not coagulate the albumen, owing to the resistance of the vital forces; but it is highly probable that it may be affected as to retard greatly the changes necessary to its elaboration into the plasma of the blood. Alcohol also diminishes the solidifiability of the fibrine.
Percy showed by injecting alcohol into the blood vessels of animals, that the blood was rendered much more fluid, and generally remained uncoagulated after death. Here again we see its ill effects in disorganizing the fibres, hindering greatly the reproductive operations of the system, the latter, being the means of repairing the waste caused by the vital actions. This is well illustrated in those who indulge greatly in strong drink, by the tediousness of the healing processes after the reception of injuries. Sometimes, in such individuals, a mere scratch will cause an ulcer which is quite difficult to cure, and will occasionally prove fatal by exhaustion and insi
lation. In fact, there is a phagedenic ulceration of the inferior extremities produced in those who indulge in wines and the like. And moreover, a fatal erysipelas inflammation, may ensue from a mere abrasion of the cuticle. This is no doubt, owing to a want of proper consistency in the fibrinoid element. Now any one with common sense, will agree, that, a person in this condition, must be more susceptible to the causes operating to produce disease, and must, succumb more readily, to any affection that may ensue. And this accords with the observations of those who have had the control of such cases, surgeons disliking to see
the knife, because of the deficiency of the digestive apparatus. Another effect. It is found that, when alcohol is mingled with fresh arterial blood, the latter is changed to a denser hue, and the red corpuscles are made to shrunk and effuse their contents into the liquor sanguinis. The darkened aspect of the blood is, perhaps, owing to the combustion of the alcohol with the oxygen, resulting in the formation of carbonic acid and water, which of course, throws more labour upon the liver and lungs to eliminate it. The opinions of the most enlightened physiologists of the present day are, that the red corpuscles help to form the fibres,
and are also carriers of oxygen. Here, again, the processes of aeration and nutrition, must be greatly impained by the accumulation of carbonaceous matter within the system, and by destroying the red corpuscles which are subservient to the above mentioned functions. After seeing how this powerful agent deranges the several components of the blood, destroying their equilibrium, which is so essential to the wonderful and uniform phenomena occurring, necessary to replace the exact, constantly taking place, and to keep the due performance of the functions of the various organs of the body, we must inevitably conclude that it is
Very pernicious to the healthful functions of the system. Besides all this, the stimulating influence of alcohol must play an important part, in deranging the functions, and indirectly, and sometimes, directly, producing disease, as intimated before. A state of depression is admitted to be the most favorable condition for the production of disease, and alcohol, by stimulating the organs, must weaken them greatly, and consequently, make them less able to resist any cause that may be in operation. Many are impressed with the erroneous idea that alcohol will shield them from disease, especially epidemics, the very thing that renders them more susceptible. We will take
as an example, cholera. When this horrible malady is raging, exciting terror in the minds of the people, many, being impressed with this fatal notion, resort to ardent spirits and fall victims to its ravages. It has been noticed that, in cities where cholera was prevailing, numerous instances where persons, of post alike and similarly situated, some being temperate and others intemperate, the latter fell, whilst the former escaped unscathed. We did intend to give some of the diseases that alcohol gives rise to, but have since deemed it unnecessary, as it can be readily perceived how it may act as a predisposing cause to most diseases and exciting to some. Alcohol not
only disturbs the vital actions, disorganizing the blood, diffusing itself through every tissue of the human economy, but destroys reason, the connecting links between man and the Deity. Plutarch's Morals, has these remarks, they usually prove wine bitters and drunkards, whose parents begot them when they were drunk; wherefore, Diogenes said to a cracked brain and half-witted youth, 'Lonely, young man, thy father begot thee when he was drunk.' And Burton, the author of The Anatomy of Melancholy, remarks, that, if a drunken man gets a child, it will never likely have a good brain. And moreover, these are well authenticated instances.
els on record, where the parents being in a state of intoxication at the time of coition, their offspring came into the world, idiots. Besides all this, it has been discovered by distinguished observers that, persons, endure cold much better without it, than with it, can perform more physical and mental labour without it, than with it, and generally live longer without it, than with it. A total abstinence is the only safe guard. Touch not, taste not, handle not, this unclean thing.
up, and on his shoulders bore, the gates of Gaza, post, and massive bar, up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old, and shawled thousands Philistines, with the jaw bone of an ass, never touched a drop. We will give the beautiful lines of Milton, as proof.

Chorus.

Deline of wine, and all delicious drinks, Which many a famous warrior overthrew, Then couldst nor presst nor didst the dancing Sparkling out pour'd, the flavor or the smell, Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men. Allure thee from the cool crystalline streams. Listen to Samson.

Whenever fountain or fresh current flowed Against the eastern wall, transcendent streams With trump ethereal of heaven's fiery rod.
I drank from the clear milky juice allaying thirst, and refreshed; nor envied them the grape whose hands that turbulent liquor fell with feces.

O madrep, to think else of strongest wines, and strongest drinks, our chief support of health, when God, with these forbidden, made choice to rear His mighty champion, strong above compare, whose drink was only from a liquid brook.