

ALCOHOL

A View of it From a Medical Stand Point.

Its Physical and Pathological Relations, Medical Properties, and Therapeutic Use.

BY J. D. MITCHELL, M. D.

To the Editor of the GAZETTE:

The main point in the following paper were prepared for the medical profession, but believing it may be of some importance to your readers, I submit such portions for publication, if you should deem it worthy.

So vastly different are the experiments of physicians of the highest authority in reference to the medical properties and therapeutic use of alcohol (and I may say the conflicting opinions of the laity as to their use as luxuries—a question not to be lost sight of in this investigation), that it would be an endless task to re-produce them. And, had we all these theories before us at one time, we would be as far from the truth, as founded upon scientific investigation and absolute facts as when we begin; except we would be more composed and less liable to form a correct opinion. I will therefore present the very latest and most approved views of the subject.

"If doctors differ who are to decide?" In the absence of a definite decision by the medical profession, the laity have decided this question to suit themselves, that is, every man is his own doctor. The truth is that alcohol in one form or another is prescribed by many physicians and used by the people, as a sort of king cure all, or panacea, "for all the ills human flesh is heir to."

It is not the object of this paper to treat of alcohol from a "total abstinence" stand point, but as a remedial agent, and its relations to the same as a food. Our therapeutics are being revised the last few years, and a large number of the list of our *materia medica* are seen to possess very different medical properties to what were ascribed to them thirty or forty years ago, through a more correct knowledge of their physiological effects. We no longer prescribe a remedy simply because some one else has done so, or simply for the name of a disease.

We do not give opium simply because a patient has pain, though pain might "be death." So in the nomenclature, pathology and etiology of disease at the present day, we are enabled to prescribe with more certainty as to results. Our pre-conceived notions should not lead us to attribute to medicines, alcohol included, properties which neither science nor art can approve. "When the wailing cry of evil to society reaches us, high moral obligations require us to make out a clear necessity for its use, or else ignore the article. Should there be a doubt, society in this case should be entitled to the benefit of the doubt."

"The medical, the pathological, the social, the moral are so eminent and urgent, so critical and searching, that it is right to put every physician in the witness box and let him tell that alcohol is ever a remedy," or even of food value. It is right to confront him with the results of manifold experiments, with the facts of skilled observers, with its failures and inability to define its precise sphere as a medicine. It is right to bring out the physical evil that it does and may do, and show how this levitation can be kept in its place. The medical man should be able to say, "thus far shalt thou go and no farther." This we profess to do in regard to all other remedies.

"The place of alcohol in the *materia medica* and its medicine action, is the all important question to be determined by the physician, when considering its action in disease." This is the common sentiment of most practitioners. "We dare not ignore the fact that it is the article of the *materia medica*, fraught with the most evil consequences when it escapes the bounds of medical necessity." It is the medicine of all others most prone to overlap the barriers, and so often glide into the sphere of tasteless appetite, that it numbers victims by the thousands in inebriation, and by tens of thousands beyond it. "If we know brandy or whiskey would save our patient, and thousands would use it from his example, or copying from his restoration and air, we would in fealty to our patient give him the remedy, and though in sorrow, would not hold ourselves responsible for the self-inflicted results to others." "But when we know the remedy itself is undertrial as a remedy at all, that equally efficient substitutes are claimed, that the so-called self infliction is so infatuating that it proves a swift delusion to many of the wisest and best, both our profession and manhood requires us to bring it to the most rigid test of necessity." I would use it as a medicine so as to secure the greatest good so far as is consistent with the interest of the patient in hand.

For the present, we will take it for granted, backed by the best authorities, alcohol has not food value, that is, in the process of restoration or repair, assimilation and disintegration and calcification, either in health or disease, and that it will not do to rely on it in "those regards where medicines chiefly concerns nutrition and the production of animal heat." By proper modification food can be made the means of curing disease, and in its management we have the greatest means for its cure and removal. But of this I will speak hereafter.

Thirty years ago alcohol was valued by the profession as a medicine on account of its heat producing effects. At the present day it is regarded by all reliable authority on therapeutics and the practice of medicine as valuable as a remedy because of its antipruritic effects. That its use does not elevate the temperature of the body, either in health or disease, is regarded as a settled question, and that it reduces the temperature in these conditions, when used as a sedative, is also regarded as settled.

New editions of the same authors have abandoned their defense of it as a stimulant and heat-producing agent, from "the light of modern analysis and experimental use, and have come to deny its value except in very narrow limits. The ordinary stimulants, such as tea and coffee, for example, are used with far more definite action in overcoming fatigue, and sustaining the body during undue exertion, than has alcohol." Excluded by common consent from the list of ordinary ailments where foods are studied with precise relation to force and effective endurance, and unreliable as a sustainer of animal heat, but used on a directly opposite hypothesis, and as it is identified with the topic,

to a degree that its use has become an abuse, its field is so far narrowed down that its only classification is that of a general stimulant. It has secondary sedative or narcotic effect, but is seldom prescribed with that view. "The narcotism which follows its stimulation is rather a paralysis of the nervous system, and the general nervous power," and are not to be compared with real sedatives and narcotics, whose therapeutic agency is so much more generally invoked when such an effect is desired." That it does generally increase the heart's action when given in moderate doses, is generally admitted. "Its action as a narcotic is its greatest peculiarity. It produces paralysis of the nerves which supply the blood vessels, and so the vessels being relaxed, the heart beats with increased frequency, with a weakened recoil stroke." Ezra Hunt M. D., in a paper read before the international medical congress in 1876 on alcohol as a medicine says: "In some sudden attacks of patients, as resulting from failure of heart action, or some profound nervous impression conveyed to the heart. Alcohol may cause a reaction, and if no other article is at hand, may be ever so good a remedy in such an emergency." Prof. H. G. Wood, in his late *materia medica* says: "It should never be relied on alone, but with it should also be exhibited some more rapidly acting, diffusible stimulant, such as ammonia."

Prof. Richardson, in his recent work on "diseases of modern life" says: "The heart beats faster under the influence of alcohol, because the contractile force of the extreme vessels are weakened, and so there is less resistance than natural. It gives evidence of not increased, but of wasted power." (p 218).

We might conceive, on the principle that alcohol equalizes the circulation, bringing the blood to the surface, it would tend to relieve congestion, and thus be beneficial in organic inflammation. But if its action is to produce relaxation of the arterioles and capillary vessels, it would, on the same principle, produce congestion of the internal organs. And this is just what is proven in persons and animals dying suddenly under the influence of alcohol. And in addition, this we know, that alcohol is carried into the circulation as a foreign tonic substance. And have we not the same "right to demand a demonstration as positive of its good effects in some cases, as we have of its evil effects in others?" Anstil, in a paper (Practit. 73, p. 361-5) advocating the claims on the theoretic basis for the use of alcohol in the early stage of acute inflammations, with the view to prevent the migration or too rapid destruction of blood cells, says: "Whether in practice the effects we desire can be really attained, is a point I do not think has been quite settled as yet."

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FRAU WILT.

From the Chicago Times.

Frau Wilt, the Austrian prima donna, has a voice that is heavenly and the most dreadful appearance of any artist I ever saw. Frau Wilt has many peculiarities, and one of them is her great avarice. When she dines at a restaurant, if in a good humor, she gives the waiter a pour boire (drink money) of one kreutzer about a cent of our money—and when she is in one of her tempers she not only gives him nothing, but wants to take back the cent she gave him the day before.

She is now a grandmother, and yet this magnificent organ remains young and agreeable. She sings up to the upper F and A, and in the "Hymn to St. Cecilia," by Handel, she makes a rill on the high C and D that is the most wonderful and beautiful ever heard. It never ends, and goes on swelling out into the harmony of a thousand musical throats all singing in one voice. But never look at her, as even the charm of so perfect an organ is lost when realizing that it comes from so ugly a woman.

Her face is coarse and red, and her eyes resemble those of an enraged bull when almost starting out of their sockets. She weighs nearly or quite 300 pounds, and has the muscular strength of a prize-fighter. She does all her own work, and one day the impressario Morelli called to engage the well-known soprano for a season of concerts. After climbing five flights of stairs he found the giantess of a woman scrubbing the sixth flight, and when she was interrupted she turned on him in a perfect fury. "What do you want?" said she to the oily impresario, whose gentle voice begged to pass.

"I wish to see Frau Wilt," responded the director, "and would thank you to—" "Not if I knew it," cried the soprano, putting her arms akimbo and growling down on Morelli. "First, what do you want of her?" "My good woman, I don't know that it is any of your business," said Mr. Morelli; "but if you will let me pass I don't mind telling you that I have come to see Frau Wilt on business, and—"

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The creature smiled grimly, seized her pail and mop cloth, flourished her red, brown arms in Morelli's face, and with a simple "Follow me," mounted the stairs. She threw open the door, entered, Morelli at her heels. Then, after going through the preliminaries of furiously blowing her nose, she wiped a great drop of perspiration from her face, and said again: "What do you want? I am Frau Wilt."

"You," said the astonished director, used to the vision of the popular prima donna in robes of silk, dressed a la mode and bejeweled. "You! I beg pardon; I must have interrupted your work. I wanted to speak to you about—ah, yes; my partner is down stairs. I will call him. We will confer together. Good morning. Mille pardons, n'est ce pas. I will come again." And off he went like a shot, dragging his long legs down all the six flights, while the astonished singer of St. Cecilian hymns yelled out that her scrubbing had been interrupted for nothing, and that she had been visited by a madman. Morelli never returned, and to this day she remains a mystified woman as to the cause of his sudden visit and complete disappearance. However, such a slight episode has not changed her mode of life, and she never imagined for a moment that her standing "deshabille" of person, with mop-cloth and slop-pail in hand was not quite the most poetical apparition imaginable of the prima donna assoluto of the Vienna Grand Opera.

CONGRATULATIONS.

New York, July 6.—The students and graduates of Columbia College meet this evening to arrange a grand reception for the victorious crew at Heneley upon their return home. Congratulatory dispatches have been already sent to the crew

LITTLE PILKINS.

(Continued From Third Page.)

er into the big bay-window of the library, and stay captive till the spring came again. The child's eyes were earnestly fixed on mine, a faint smile flitted over her face now and then, and once in a while her fingers pressed mine.

"Go on; go on, please," she said when I paused. "Isn't there any more?"

"Oh yes, any quantity; all you want to hear."

So I went on then to tell her of the robins that built their nest in the elm tree, with a little piece of pink tissue paper at one side for a festive banner; of the felonious old gray puss that tried to steal the baby-birds, and got sent away for it; of the two fat toads that lived at their ease in the lettuce bed, and came out at dusk to ensnare insects with their lasso-like tongues; of the great green spotted frog, a perfect stranger to all the family, who suddenly arrived one morning from foreign parts, without a shadow of introduction, and coolly settled himself in the high grass around the mossy trough that catches the drippings from the well.

The sultry August morning had been growing sultrier and more oppressive every moment; the distant, busy hum of the streets was only an indistinct murmur, and the house was absolutely still.

The great, bright eyes that had been fixed on mine at first, had slowly drooped and languished, and closed more than once, and the child seemed too drowsy to speak. But again the little fingers pressed mine faintly, and again I talked on, in the most dreaming, drowsing tones I could command, spinning an endless

bread, spider-fashion, out of myself about anything that came uppermost; the bees that visited my garden, and foraged for honey and pollen in such a fuzzy, buzzy, blundering way, hurrying and scrambling for fear some other bee should get ahead of them, and muttering and talking about it all the time, like some people who take their dinner with so much needless noise and commotion that their friends wish they would do their eating in Greenland, and only come home between times. And then of the butterflies, the gorgeous, beautiful creatures, the flying flowers that perch upon the anchored ones, and fan them with their painted wings, and display their beauties in the sunshine, and sip so deftly, that like some other people who take their bite and sup most tantalizingly, pleasing you with their brightness all the time, you hardly ever remember that they eat at all.

And then of the wasps, those fervid fireworkshoppers, who seem to die with every chilling wind and to be born again with the sunshine; idle as well as peevish, they like best the vicious silence and other gummy flowers that have already generously exuded their treasures for them; but most of all they love the juice of a bruised strawberry, an over-ripe raspberry or a fallen pear! That's the wine for their lordships! They tipple and tingle, till they scarcely can rise again in the warm summer air, and then go drifting lazily by to leeward, centerboard down.

The child's eyes had now long been closed, the fingers had fallen quite away from mine, her white frame seemed relaxed and languid in a sweet, calm sleep. Softly rising from seat, and holding up my finger to Everett as an entreaty for perfect stillness, I stole silently away again to my own Garden of Eden. Not many days after, my little Pilkins came once more to see me. I spoke to him cheerfully as he entered the library but he did not answer. I asked him if anything had happened, if Florry was worse, but he could not answer. I opened my arms and he ran into them, hid his face on my shoulder and cried long, long and heavily.

True to himself, however, he struggled with his sorrow; he checked it as manfully as he could, and soon lifting his head, he said gently:

"My Florry's gone, all gone at last! She went away this morning, just a little while ago, and everything happened the way she wanted it. She had a good sleep the day you were there. When she woke up she said, 'Eddy, dear, when you see the lady that lives in the Garneau-Edena, tell her she soothed me to a sweet, long sleep, the best I ever had. And in that sleep she had a vision. It was a vision of an angel. It was dressed in white and it looked like you, and flowers as you had."

I smiled at the simple childishness that did not see how the living fact had suggested the dreaming fancy.

"Yes," Everett went on, "and it smiled, too, like you smiled at Florry, and it looked in her eyes, and it laid its gentle hand on Florry's, and it said, 'I'm sure you would not be afraid to go with me, and Florry said 'Oh no, not at all! I'd love to go with you!' And then it said, 'I shall come soon,' and it faded away like a light, rainer and fainter, smiling at Florry all the time. It looked like you, only it was ever so much bigger and stronger, and dazzled up all the room. Joey said it was a dream, but Florry said no, it was a vision; and said again: 'Who knows? let the child take her comfort!'"

The next morning Florry made them wash her nice and clean and lay her white frock by her. "It may come to-day, Eddy, dear, she said, 'or it may come to-morrow; and I must be all ready.' And yesterday she got all ready again and waited. But this morning she called Joey early, and made her put the white dress on her, and tie her curly hair with the new white ribbon. "This is the day," she said: "I wasn't sure before, but now I know it; call them in, and kiss me good-bye, all!" Then we all kissed her good-bye, one by one; and little Collo felt lonely, and clung up on the bed, and cried and lapped her cheeks, so she kissed him good-bye too, and he clung right down by her side. Then she said she was tired and wanted to go to sleep; but she wanted Joey to lay the little new baby on her arm so that she could feel it there a little while, and then she smiled at us and said, "I'm just as happy as I can be, and fell fast asleep."

"And did not walk again?"

"Only for a minute. We think the angles must have come for her; for after a while, she opened her eyes quick and bright, just as if somebody had called her, and said softly, 'Yes, yes! I'm all ready!' Then we all kissed her good-bye, one by one; and little Collo felt lonely, and clung up on the bed, and cried and lapped her arms to be carried, and then—and then—they said she was gone!"

Once more the poor little man gave in to his sorrow and leaned his head on me, and sobbed, while I spoke such words of sympathy as seemed to soothe him best. "Everett," I said at last, "let us do something for Florry that we

know she would like. Let us take quantities of flowers, rich and sweet and beautiful, and let us make a perfect bed of them—bed and pillow and coverlet—for the little form in its little white dress that Florry left behind her."

"Oh, that would be nice," said Everett: "Florry did love flowers so much."

And so we did; the little pearl-white child with all that was beneath her and above her, we so garlanded and crowned and wreathed and decked with flowers that the last picture of her on earth was that of a waxen bird in a great wilderness of glowing brilliant blossoms.

This happened on the eve of a long-plant visit to the sea-shore.

When I returned, after six weeks or more, I missed my little comrade. I looked often at the place in the open paling where the pleasant little face had been wont to frame itself, and I missed many a time for the soft footfalls that used to come so unintrusively in at the side gate, but in vain. At last I bade my handmaid Rose summon him to his friend and the flowers once more.

"Oh, dear, ma'am," she exclaimed penitently, "I do beg your pardon, I'm sure! I forgot entirely to tell you that the little fellow was here twice to see you. The last time, when I told him you'd be away for a couple of weeks yet, he just cried and said he'd never see you again, and he left a long message for you. I passed particular remarks upon it, ma'am, he gave it so wise and old-fashioned like! 'Tell her,' said he, 'that I came to say good-bye. Father says a poor man with a big family can't do much for his children, but he can give 'em room to grow, for room's cheap out West in this country, if anything is; so we're going out West, far, far West, and I'm afraid I'll never see her again!'

His foreboding was true; I have ever seen or heard of him since; but still, through the dissolving years, my heart has ever remained faithful to the memory of my own Little Pilkins.

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SHERIFF'S SALE.

By virtue of a decree and order of sale issued from the Vigo Circuit Court, to me directed and delivered, in favor of Herman Hulman and Robert S. Cox and against Fielding W. Romine, May A. Romine, Benjamin D. Wheat and John Paddock, guardian of John C. Gross, I am ordered to sell the following described real estate, situated in Vigo County, Indiana, to-wit:

The undivided one half (½) of (10) acres heretofore set off to the widow of William Ferguson, deceased, described as follows: Part of the west side of the northwest quarter (¼) of section two (2) townships ten (10) north range ten (10) west; also the undivided one half (½) of ten (10) acres heretofore set off to the widow of William Ferguson, deceased, described as follows: A part of the southwest quarter (¼) of section twelve (12) townships ten (10) north range ten (10) west, and on

SATURDAY, the 20th day of July, 1878,

within the legal hours of said day, at the court house door in Terre Haute, I will offer the rents and profits of the above described real estate, together with all privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, for a term, not exceeding seven years, to the highest bidder for cash, and upon failure to realize a sum sufficient to satisfy said order of sale and costs, I will then and there offer the fee-simple, in and to said real estate, to the highest bidder for cash to satisfy the same. This

22d day of July, 1878.

GEORGE W. CARICO,

Sheriff.

P'r's. fee \$8.00

We refer to G. W. Carico, Agent.

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RADE MARK is especially recommended as an unflavored specific for the cure of all diseases of