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Original Articles.

SLAKING THIRST.

AN argument is often adduced by non-temperance men somewhat to this effect:—"That it is almost absolutely impossible to exist in such hot, enervating weather as we have now, without what you call *strong drink*, but what we call *strengthening drinks*. The process of reduction which takes place so largely in the system, necessitates the adoption or use of some such counter-balancing restorative, as is afforded by the use of stimulants. Then, too, the stimulating beverages are made deliciously cool by ice, and what we ask in conclusion, could you take more peculiarly appropriate to the present time, than a draught or draughts of something at once delightfully refreshing and reasonably exhilarating?"

This argument at first sight seems doubly trenchant, but before we have concluded, we hope to show that it is purely fallacious. Let us endeavour to blunt one edge first, only premising, that when we make use of the word "drink" it is not to be understood in the common acceptance of the word, but as applying indiscriminately to all fluids used for drinking purposes.

Undoubtedly, in hot, sultry weather the amount of moisture given off the six or seven millions of pores is very considerably more than the amount of exudation in chillier times. Such being the case, one might suppose a corresponding extra amount of fluids would be required to supply the waste. Such, however, is not necessary, and a superabundance of drink is quite as deleterious to general health, as is its deprivation. This must not be taken as the writer's individual opinion alone, unsupported by facts.

Nine years ago a party of gentlemen made a photographic expedition in North Australia. Some made a habit of drinking water freely during the day, whenever at opportunity presented itself. Two of the party, however—it was from the lips of one that we had the story—determined to try the experiment of imbibing as little moisture during the day as was compatible with comfort. The consequence was that, in the first instance, such a supply only created a demand, and long before the expedition was concluded, those who drank freely were utterly incapacitated from hard work; whilst the other two who drank sparingly met and overcame the exigencies of the journey with an ease and comfort that seemed simply wonderful to their fagged companions. Even in a matter of a hot day's march, the difference was clearly discernible. They were not as the narrator termed it, "so distressed." Such a fact as this is in itself really valuable as a confutation.

Those of the faculty who are unprejudiced will confirm the statement above made. Besides, the majority of travellers aver the same thing, Bruce, to wit. Kinglake, the gifted author of *Esthen*, states distinctly that in crossing the fiery, scorching Deserts of Arabia, nothing afforded him so much comfort and refreshment as a sip of *cold tea*. And, bye-the-bye, nothing that we know of is nearly so refreshing as a sip of cold black tea. It is in this hot weather indeed, "a cup that cheers, but not inebriates."

Lord Clyde too gave it as his experience that the man whose canteen was empty first, was the man who was fagged first.

Let these facts prove that copious libations to Sol,

have not even the plea of necessity. In the matter of spirituous "liquoring up," we shall attempt to show the advisability of such a practice in hot weather, and again not so much by force of argument, as by that stronger one of fact. A short time ago, when dining with one Captain Horwill, he related the following striking incident: Captain Horwill, himself not a temperance man, was present at the theatre of the drama and witnessed the playing out of the tragedy.

Off that dangerous, fever-ridden spot, the south coast of Africa, there lies the group of guano islands; named Ichaboe. Here some eleven hundred men were engaged in work, in work, too, of the most trying and disagreeable nature. For twelve years these men lived on the plainest of fare, obtained from the mainland, using as a beverage only a very moderate supply of tea and coffee. For twelve years the health they enjoyed was perfect, the only casualty being the partial disabling of one man, through an accidental wound with some cutting instrument. In due ratio to the discomfort of the work, the wages were good, and the men had accumulated sufficient to keep them in comparative comfort at home, and had already begun forming plans for home settlement, when by some sad fatality, a few kegs of whiskey were left in the little colony. The liquor was made use of freely and strange, no, not strange, but sad to say, coincidental with the use of the fire-water as if by magic, fever and pestilence played such dire havoc with the workers, that they were more than decimated. The mortality was frightful, something like sixty per cent.

A more remarkable instance of the miserable disadvantage of "strengthening drinks" we do not remember to have met with. Here were these men exposed to a tropical heat, and engaged in an employment unmatched perhaps for unpleasantness, living on food that only our lumbermen are inured to, drinking only the most reasonable quantity of tea and coffee, and yet living such healthy lives as our free drinking communities know nothing of—at least by experience. Then came the liquor, and with it, its brother spirits—evil and misery. It would certainly be most unfair to urge as an explanation that this was simply the result of a coincidence. The facts are so clear, the effect so evident, the inference so obvious, that, to every unbiassed mind, must come but one conclusion.

But no reasonable man in his sober senses does, or ever did, believe that such quantities of alcoholic drinks as are now so freely taken can have any beneficially cooling influence. The thing seems palpably absurd. It is a well known fact that, next to oleaginous and glutinous matters, alcohol has the greatest percentage of heat-giving properties. How, then, can it reasonably be expected that any preparation of such can cool or satisfy the thirst? It is but adding fuel to the fire—adding fuel, too, in unreasonable and unnecessary super-proportion to the demand.

It must be granted then, we think, first, that too much drink of any sort, even water, is hurtful and injurious; and secondly, it is just as evident that alcoholic drinks, in any shape or form, can by no means cool, as they certainly do not refresh. Also, that the greater the amount of moderation observed in drinking during the hot weather, the greater will be the probabilities of your enjoying health and comfort.

But the non-temperance man argues, "See what admirable sophistry you use. You talk readily enough

about the 'heat-giving properties of alcohol,' and the absurdity of supposing such can exercise a cooling influence on our sun-baked, sun-dried frames; but you ignore altogether the fact that nearly all our summer beverages are made deliciously, refreshingly cool by the use of ice."

Au contraire, the fact of ice being so copiously made use of is simply an argument *contra*, and certainly not *pro*. It would be difficult to choose between these two evils, the Alcoholic Scylla and the Icy Charybdis. First of all, though, let one mistake be rectified. However much disguised alcohol may be by ice or anything else, the spirit remains the same and is the same. With reference now to the iced drinks: just imagine for one moment the fact of the caloric generated in the digestive organs amounting to between 90° and 100° of heat, and then imagine draughts of mixtures of intense cold poured down into this reeking furnace! Why, the very idea seems to produce unhealthy symptoms in the abdominal regions. Such conduct is nothing more or less than deliberately sowing broadcast the seeds of all miserable stomachic complaints and ailments. The only wonder is that dyspepsia, dysentery, diarrhoea, and other kindred scourges are not more prevalent than they are. The injurious effect such conduct *must* have on the system is something saddening to think of. No wonder, either, that toothache claims its victims wholesale. Such a subject need not be argued to become convincing; it need only be pondered over.

We shall not even recapitulate, but trust to all our readers' good sense to see that an argument, however plausible at first sight, should be carefully looked into and weighed before accepted and acted on. Lastly, simply remember the gist of the above remarks lies in a higher authority than ours, that authority which teaches us "to be temperate in *all things!*"—T. J. V.

PHILOLOGICAL FILBERTS.

No. 1.

WE are great sticklers for speaking, and writing the English language with propriety; and therefore always keep Dean Alford's book—"the Queen's English,"—at our elbow. Our readers profit by this practice more than they suppose. We were rewarded this morning for our pains-taking by an important discovery. How often have we used the apparently innocent words, "Dear, dear; O dear me!" without suspecting our dangerous proximity to profane swearing. The Dean was no wiser on this point, until he went to Rome,—but we will let him tell his own story. "I had observed," he says, "that my Italian friends often in their talk uttered some sounds very like our 'dear, dear!' and at first I thought that my ears must have deceived me. But I soon found that it was so; and that sometimes the exclamation even took the form of 'dear me!' The explanation, of course, is obvious. The Italians were exclaiming, 'Dio, Dio!' and the fuller form was 'Dio mio!' And the reflection arising from it was as obvious: viz., that it thus seems probable that our unmeaning words, 'dear, dear,' and 'dear me!' are, in fact, nothing but a form of taking the Sacred Name in vain, borrowed from the use of a people with whom we were once in much closer intercourse than we are now. Thus it would seem that the *idle* word is not quite free from blame."