

Temperance

A Drop to Keep the Cold Out.

(By Councillor Malins, G.O.T.)

The Common Idea.

There is a common idea that the use of intoxicating drinks, especially in the form of ardent spirits, is a protection against the cold of winter. It is no wonder that this belief is common, because ardent spirits are hot to the taste, and their use certainly causes the skin to glow with additional warmth. Such being the case, it would seem that strong drink actually imparts that warmth that it adds to the heat of the body, and so helps to keep out the cold.

What Can Be Proved?

Yet it can be proved to the hilt that if a man has to face a journey on a winter's night, the worst thing he could do is to drink any intoxicant—even in moderation. This seems very strange, but when the subject is understood, nothing in the world can be more simple or more true than that the man who drinks alcoholic drinks to keep the cold out is really doing that which will let the cold in.

What are Alcoholic Drinks?

Alcoholic drinks are called ardent spirits, wines, malt liquors, cider, and perry. All are made from fermented grain or fruit. In fermenting, the sugar in the grain or fruit is changed into the spirit alcohol, which is the intoxicating element in all these drinks. It is the alcohol which makes the drink taste warm, and gives a feeling of additional heat. But for the alcohol people would not drink these beverages, and it is the alcohol which they think gives the body the heat which is felt all over the skin after it has been drunk.

How the Body Feels Warmer.

It is true the alcohol makes the mouth and stomach warm for a minute or two, because the alcohol of itself is of a hot nature; but does that alcohol in the stomach warm every inch of the outside surface of the body from the top of the head to the tips of the fingers and toes? It feels as if it did. In a short time after drinking the whole surface of the body actually is warmer for a short time. Now, has the alcohol given it that additional warmth? How is it that a small swallow of liquor inside seems to have warmed the body all over the outside? Has the liquor thus warmed the surface of the body? That is the question. The reply to it is—that it has not, but that it has done something quite different, as will now be explained.

How the Alcohol Acts.

The alcohol in intoxicating drink of any kind for a short time affects the nerves and makes the heart beat faster than it otherwise would. It slackens the nerves which regulate the blood vessels, and thus the blood-vessels are dilated or expanded more than usual so that the blood flows through them more freely; and it at the same time excites and increases the number of the heart-beats, and every additional heart-beat pumps the blood

more rapidly through the blood-vessels which have been thus dilated by the slackening of their nerves.

What Effect Does Its Action Have?

Before the alcohol was taken the surface of the body in the winter air would be more or less cold, but the thickness of the outer flesh of the body would have protected the inner organs from the cold; and even the cool blood in the veins near the surface of the body would have time to get warm as it slowly circulated to the inward parts. But when the alcohol is swallowed, the warm blood inside is quickly pumped by the excited heart through the distended blood vessels to the outside; while the cold blood that was near the surface of the skin is driven to chill the inside of the body. Meanwhile the hot blood which was keeping the vital organs warm where needed was rushed to the outside surface of the body, and caused it to glow as if the person were standing in front of a fire.

What is the Result?

The result is that the internal heat, which was needed to be kept inside to keep the vital organs warm, is instead thrown to the outer surface of the body, and there the cold air draws the heat off into the atmosphere, while the blood thus cooled is driven round by the still beating heart till it returns to the interior organs of the body in a chilled condition. Thus the cold contracts the blood vessels closer than they naturally are, thickens the blood so that it flows less easily, and checks the beats of the heart so that it pumps the blood too slowly—till the whole system is depressed and the temperature of the body lowered below what it was before the alcohol was taken.

What Arctic Explorers Found.

Sir John Richardson, M.D., the Arctic explorer, said:—'I am quite satisfied that spirituous liquors diminish the power of resisting cold. Plenty of food and sound digestion are the best sources of heat. We found on our northern journey that tea was far more refreshing than wine or spirits, which we soon ceased to care for, while the craving for tea increased. Liebig, I believe, considers that spirits are necessary to northern nations, to diminish the waste of the solids of the body, but my experience leads me to a contrary conclusion. The Hudson's Bay Company have for many years entirely excluded spirits from their fur-countries in the north, over which they have exclusive control, to the great improvement of the health and morals of their Canadian servants and of the Indian tribes.'

The Arctic explorers Kennedy and Kane also found alcoholic liquors were best done without in Polar regions.

Dr. J. Robertson, who was surgeon in Sir James Ross's Antarctic expedition, testified before a Parliamentary Committee that warm tea or coffee was preferable to spirits, and that it had become the regular practice of hunters of the North-West Company to take tea instead of spirits because they found tea more sustaining.

Captain Edward Parry, after twelve years' experience in the Arctic regions, said:—'Are ardent spirits necessary? I say decidedly no. It is said they keep the cold out. I say they do not; they let the cold in.'

Adam Ayles and his fellow Good Templar and teetotal seamen in the McClintock Arctic Expedition (which discovered the remains of Sir John Franklin's Expedition) proved best able to endure the cold, and their example

was largely followed by the other members of the expedition. When their ships were frozen in the ice, Adam Ayles was one of those who dragged the sledge to the farthest northern point, each carrying on his back a picture for the man behind to look at—to prevent snow blindness resulting from only seeing glittering snow.

Under the rule of temperance you will grow up strengthened in wisdom, industry, and happiness; and your success in life will reward you a thousandfold for any sacrifice of false indulgence in that great curse of mankind, strong drink.—Dr. B. W. Richardson.

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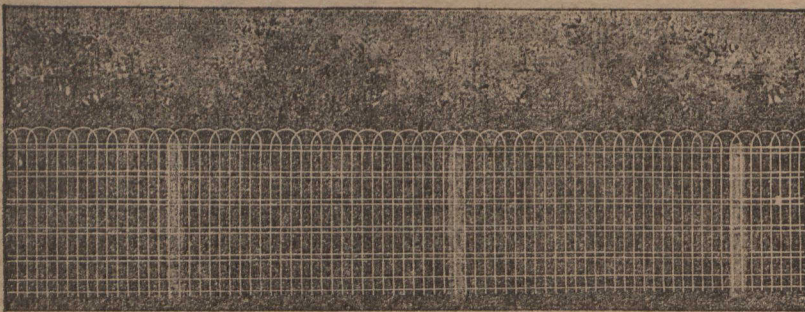
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