

is no unanimity of opinion in the profession as to the relation of alcohol to the living body. Three quarters of a century ago it was prescribed by all physicians, recommended by friends on all occasions, and taken by everybody. This universal belief in its efficacy had obtained for a couple of centuries or more before Dr. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, which was announced in 1620. The scientific knowledge that was so much esteemed and so carefully guarded by the learned classes of the ancients was well nigh obliterated during the period extending from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries. Under such a *regime* could anything else than an almost universal belief in alcohol be expected; and especially when we remember that the method of distillation or concentration was discovered, and its product flaunted in the face of a degraded and debased civilization as the *elixir of life*? But how came this most serious misapprehension to obtain such universal acceptance? A portion of the answer is found in the preceding paragraph. Ignorance and superstition had taken the place of reason and spiritual rectitude. The remainder of the answer must be sought in a consideration of the relation that alcohol bears to the living organism when brought into immediate contact, which appears to have been wholly misunderstood by the entire medical world. The increased feeling of strength that is experienced when it is introduced into the vital domain has been erroneously supposed to be afforded or supplied by the alcohol. Hence the conclusion that it was the *elixir of life*. And, though almost immediately it proved itself to be immensely destructive to human life, it was still erroneously supposed to possess food properties, and to be indispensable as a remedy in the hands of the medical profession. Their premises were wrong, and consequently their conclusions were erroneous. Within the last twenty or thirty years immense strides have been made in correcting medical errors, and instead of the action being ascribed to the substance taken, as was the universal custom, it is now known to be on the part of the vital forces acting within us. This changing of our primary premise enables us to unravel this alcoholic mystery.

If a sponge is saturated with alcohol and applied to the back of the hand, in a short time the surface to which it is applied becomes red, and if continued for some time a blister will appear. The redness is caused by the blood, under control of the vital intelligence or nervous energy, being sent to the part to protect the living tissue from contact with an offensive poison, and, as it cannot remove it, it being outside the vital domain, a barrier of water is thrown up under the cuticle for the purpose of separating the offensive substance from that part of the body. When alcohol is taken into the stomach a similarly directed action is established. Under control of this vital intelligence the absorbent takes up the offensive material, which enters the circulation, and is carried to the depurating organs, the lungs, skin, liver, kidneys, and bowels, where it is expelled from the vital domain. The presence of the alcohol in the stomach has aroused the nervous energies to vigorous action, the circulation is increased, and there is a rapid expenditure of power, which gives a feeling of increased strength, similar to what is experienced after a labourer has commenced his day's work having had a previous night's rest. And this manifestation of force has been mistaken for a production instead of an expenditure of power.

There is this difference in the cases cited. The labourer expends his force through the motor organs, the muscles and tendons, which is in strict accordance with the design of nature; while the expenditure in expelling the alcohol is illegitimate because it is an expenditure of *vital force*—the stomach, circulating system, and depurating apparatus being called into vigorous action—without an adequate return in the shape of digested food, which is the prescribed duty of these organs. Vital power has been expended unnaturally in removing a substance that could not undergo the necessary transformations to rebuild the structures of the body. If this energy had been expended in digesting a properly selected food, a return in the shape of material prepared to repair the various structures would have been made, which is also in strict accordance with the design of nature.

The testimony of medical men adduced by the Superintendent appears to the casual observer to be overwhelmingly convincing; but when it is considered that quite as strong an array can be offered on the other side, proving conclusively that it is wrong to

prescribe alcohol, we are left in doubt so far as they are concerned. Alcohol is good, *per se*, or it is not, irrespective of the opinions of medical men. It has been pretended by some assuming members of the profession that a vast difference in its effects would result if prescribed by a doctor instead of the individual himself. Nature makes no such nice distinctions. She always recognizes it as an offensive intruder, to be carried outside the precincts of the body. If the quantity is very limited there is less superfluous work to do, and it is more easily accomplished, hence there is comparatively little injury inflicted; while, if the dose is a large one, or if too frequently repeated, the harm done is proportionate. We easily distinguish the rocks, while the pebbles are often unobserved. A.

"THE LAST SLEEP OF ARGYLE."

Such is the title of a painting by the late E. M. Ward, R.A. The subject is taken from the following anecdote of the Marquis of Argyle, who was beheaded on the 27th of May, 1661. A few hours before his execution, an intimate acquaintance who, from fear, had gone over to the persecuting party, called at the prison to see him. The jailer said that he could not admit him as the Marquis was then asleep. "He cannot be asleep so near his last hour," said the other. "Come, and see for yourself, then," answered the jailer, and taking him to his cell, he opened the door, and ushered him in. There—like Peter the night before his intended execution—Argyle, so soon to fall asleep in Jesus, lay sleeping as sweetly as ever babe slept in its mother's bosom. In great anguish of mind, the visitor went home and said to his family, "I have just seen a strange sight—Argyle sound asleep within a few hours of eternity. How different it is with me! From fear of man I have denied my Lord."

The painting referred to, is—excepting one or two slight defects—a very excellent one. It represents the Marquis asleep in a rude bed. Light comes in through a window at the head. The visitor stands at the foot gazing on him. Behind him is the jailer. The last named is in the shadow of the massy door. The light thus—according to a rule in historical painting—falls on the principal figures. In the background, through an open door, we see a table prepared for a meal. I may here remark that when Argyle's body was opened after death, it was found that the food which he had taken shortly before he suffered, was quite digested—a clear proof that the calmness which he showed in the closing scene was not merely outward.

"The Last Sleep of Argyle" is interesting on several accounts, apart from its merits as a work of art. It is so to Canadians. He, whose last sleep on earth it represents, was one of the ancestors of our Governor-General. Truly, it is a high honour to the Marquis of Lorne that on the roll of "the noble army of martyrs"—among whom are so many of Scotia's sons and daughters—the name of Argyle is found more than once. May he walk in the footsteps of his martyred ancestors, in so far as they walked in those of Christ. Most appropriate to him is the counsel in Voltaire's tragedy of *Zaire*:

"— songe du sang qui coule dans tes veines,
C'est le sang de martyrs."

("Think on the blood that flows in thy veins,
'Tis martyrs' blood.")

It is interesting to Presbyterians, yea to every lover of civil and religious liberty. Worthy to be had in reverence is the blue banner of the Covenant. With few exceptions, the Covenanters—notwithstanding their seeming gloominess, stubbornness, and harshness—were all noble men. Those of them who were also noblemen, have bestowed ten thousand times more glory on their titles than they have received from them. The Covenanters helped greatly to plant the tree of civil and religious freedom of whose pleasant fruit we now eat. Gratitude should, therefore, make us deal gently with them wherein they erred. In justice to them we should—as far as we can do so—in imagination, place ourselves in their circumstances. We should always act on this principle in judging the sayings and doings of our fellow beings. The subject of this paper is one of eight pictures which the artist painted for the British House of Commons. It adorns the corridor of that building. Pleasing it is to see one so highly honoured, who was sent by his enemies out of the world, because in their opinion "he was not fit to live." In one sense, this was true of him. He

was one "of whom the world was not worthy." The death of the artist—which took place towards the close of last year—was a very sad one. He died by his own hand, it is said while in a state of insanity, the effect of bodily illness from which he had only partly recovered.

A small engraving of this painting appears in Part I. of "Cassell's Magazine of Art." Two or three engravings—for example one of Knox College—have already appeared in the PRESBYTERIAN. For some of the reasons just stated, one of "The Last Sleep of Argyle" is very worthy of a place in the same paper.

Melis, Que.

T. F.

"HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE."

MR. EDITOR,—Ministers have manes; why should not at least the Principals of our Theological Colleges get official residences from our Church? One of the first steps taken to do honour to the newly installed Bishop Sweatman of this Diocese was the issue of a circular to congregations asking aid for the erection or purchase of what they call a See House. Principal Caven's brother professors have been enabled by a kind Providence to provide homes of their own near Knox College, and before the eligible adjoining or surrounding lots are sold, off or increase in price, I would like to see some steps taken to honour him in the way proposed. When the Church was asked to increase the salaries of our Professors, the argument was often used that they should be placed on a par with the University Professors. None of the Toronto University Professors, so far as I know, have official residences, but if Bishops of Dioceses in the Church of England enjoy these, I do not think that even a debt of \$26,000 on Knox College, covered as it is by a subscription list of large amount, should prevent the purchase at least of a lot for the future residence of its Principals. If you ask how in these hard times the money can be raised, I can only suggest the idea of the Bishop of Huron for the erection of a new cathedral at London, viz.: that if he had 100,000 adherents of the Church of England in his Diocese, he might surely be justified in reckoning \$100,000 for the cathedral, of which he has already secured a very handsome chapter house, etc. If ministers and office-bearers in Western Ontario all took an interest in securing \$1 subscriptions, the Principal's residence would soon be a reality. Even our Presbyterian Sabbath school children in a smaller Province have taught us the power of their cents and pennies, in the purchase, outfit and sailing of fine missionary ships in the South Seas.

THE FIRST DOLLAR BILL.

Toronto, 17th June, 1879.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ORDINATION.

MR. EDITOR,—Will you kindly permit me to say a word in regard to receiving a priest from the Church of Rome into our Church without re-ordination? What is the position of our Church in relation to Roman Catholicism? I am involved in mystery. Does it regard the Church of Rome as a branch of the Church of Christ? It must do so or the ordination of the received Priest, A. Internoscia, is invalid, and men may exercise the office of the ministry in the Presbyterian Church without being ordained. Admitting the ordination acknowledges the Church of Rome to be the Church of Christ. Then all the contributions to convert the children of Rome is to convert the Church of Christ. Congregations had better pause and consider before contributing to the \$25,000 required this year to carry on French Evangelization in Quebec and give that amount to Home and Foreign Mission Schemes until the General Assembly announces its position. As a minister of the Church I feel called upon to enlighten the givers to the schemes of the Church on this subject. B.A.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROBATIONERS.

MR. EDITOR,—In a small town in the State of Indiana, a German and his wife entered a lawyer's office. The man had a broken nose, and several cuts on the head, received by a contact with the poker. The woman had a pair of black eyes and sundry bruises on the face. The man addressed the lawyer thus: "Just look at those black eyes I have given to my wife, and this broken nose and all those bruises she has given me, and say yourself if we should not be divorced."

Any one who has read carefully all the letters which