

at sixty. True, he was never intoxicated; he would have shuddered, always, at the thought of a lurking suspicion of this sort in any human mind. But he has drank his dram at five o'clock, ere rising; at eleven o'clock, as a preparation for dinner; and at four o'clock in the afternoon, as steadily and as certainly as these seasons have recurred, till his system is poisoned through every pore and fibre. And yet, till lately, he has scarcely felt a pain. Now, a host of exciting causes, as so many igniting sparks, have kindled into a flame all the latent predispositions to disease, which a long, but persevering course of transgression had induced. He realizes, just now,—*did he but realize it*,—the full import of the saying of Solomon: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set on them to do evil."

But what can be done with him? As surely as alcohol has circulated through every pore of his system for twenty or thirty years, just so surely has he been poisoned, as I said before, at every pore. The mucous membranes, in particular, are poisoned. For proof of this you have but to lay open his alimentary canal, or his bronchial tubes, and what do you see but hollow passages as red as fire—indeed, *on fire*—that is in a state of sub-inflammation? Now in these circumstances what can medicine do? or if *any thing* in *any shape*, what shall it be, and in what *shape*? No living medical man, be he wise as the wisest of the present or past, can tell. He can guess, and perhaps a little better than those who have neither studied the human constitution nor the nature or power of medicine. But he must *guess*, still; it is *only* guessing in such circumstances. Is there no difficulty in the practice of medicine?

Here is a female patient. She has lived twenty years, it may be more, for I have seen women—married women at least—who were over twenty. But young as she is, she is full of disease, and would gladly be freed from at least a part of it. What is to be done? We must look well to the causes of her suffering. She has neither drunk spirits nor used tobacco. I recall; she has done both. She has drunk *spirits*, alcohol, whenever she has drunk cider, beer, ale or wine. All *fermented* drinks contain more or less of alcohol; and though she would not for the world have drunk *distilled* spirits, she has not hesitated, occasionally, to drink *fermented* drinks,—wine, with considerable freedom. I have even heard her speak, with much emphasis, of the future triumphs of temperance, from the increased and very general cultivation of the grape, and the consequent manufacture of large quantities of wine in this country, as in France. But she has also drunk tea and coffee *ad libitum*; and her nervous system is in a most terrible condition. How, in such cases, is her family physician to apportion his dose, whether allopathic or homeopathic—whether botanic or mineral—to her case? Is he not quite as likely to madden, still more, her already half-frenzied brain as to allay irritation by his medicines?

Or, finally, what is still more frequent among us, here is a child, "dreadfully sick," with bowel complaint. As yet he has never drunk alcohol, whether in one form or another: or smoked or chewed tobacco. Nor has he become, at such a tender age, an inveterate tea or