

II. Its Effects on the Blood.

22. The blood is the life-current of the body ; that which carries the nutritive particles furnished by the food to every part, supplying heat and nourishment. It is forced out from the heart through the arteries, returns to it through the veins, and is then sent to the lungs to be purified and re-vitalized before it is again sent out on its life-giving mission.

The nutritive part of the blood consists of a great number of very minute globules, mostly red, called **blood corpuscles**. They are so small that 3,000 can lie side by side in a single inch, and are like jelly in their nature. In their passage through the body these little corpuscles **absorb carbonic acid**, a substance very injurious to life, and convey it by way of the heart to the lungs, where it is given off and thrown out by the breath we exhale. The same corpuscles immediately **become charged with oxygen**, an essential supporter of life, from the air which is inhaled, and their color is at once changed from dark red to bright red. This is due to the oxygen absorbed, which is distributed to every part of the body and carbonic acid again taken up in turn. So the work constantly goes on and we are preserved in health and vigor.

But when alcohol gets into the blood the little corpuscles become shrivelled or corrugated, because a portion of water has been taken from them by the alcohol, which has such a greed for water. Being thus