

was required, and none other was obtainable, I readily concede; but alcohol is a narcotic stimulant, and as such must ever be regarded by the prudent practitioner as a treacherous and dangerous remedy, since it is exceedingly liable, when given in the smallest excess of the patient's physical power of resistance, to manifest its intoxicating and narcotic or depressing action. Happily we are possessed of stimulants which are not also intoxicants and narcotics; and when stimulants are demanded, as sometimes they are, the conscientious practitioner will be found making his selection from these, and rejecting alcohol.

That alcohol is an anæsthetic, or nerve deadener, is only too apparent in the case of every drunkard who may have his teeth knocked out, his limbs broken, or be subjected to the severest personal injuries, without evincing any sign of pain or suffering until he has returned to soberness. Indeed so good an anæsthetic is alcohol that it has been recommended by Dr. Ainslie for facial and cranial neuralgia—a disease of which it is a most fruitful cause. But then we have better and less dangerous anæsthetics in ether and chloroform, because unattended by the appetite-producing power.

Alcohol then has been proven, beyond all cavil, not to be a *food*, that is, an agent capable of producing, supporting, or repairing tissue, since by repeated demonstration and experiment it has been proved not to be so chemically constituted as to be able to furnish the necessary chemical elements required to feed the tissue.

Experience has proved it false to its vaunted efficacy in warming the body amid the depressing influences of surrounding cold; and it has also been clearly demonstrated that it does not increase but lessens the powers of physical endurance.

As a medicinal agent it cannot be claimed to possess the specific action necessary to the cure of a single one of the numerous diseases flesh is heir to, while as a poison it stands arraigned as guilty of having produced disease in every important organ of the human body. When taken into the system it inflames the stomach, congests the liver, irritates the bowels, and deranges the whole process of digestion and assimilation, upon the proper performance of which the support of the body entirely depends. It irritates and corrodes the blood-vessels, induces heart and lung diseases, and by its direct action upon the brain (in which organ it is always found in a pure state in the brain of drunkards,) hardening its tissues and changing its structure it destroys the *will* power upon which so much human happiness and prosperity depends, and substitutes a diseased imagination, or a dethroned reason, or it may be the mad frenzy of delirium tremens with the poor victim busily engaged in conjuring up terrific images of

“Most monstrous, most prodigious things.”

Indeed I am constrained to say that there is scarcely a morbid affection to which the human body is liable that has not, in one way or other, been produced by it; there is not a disease but it has aggravated; nor a predisposition to disease that it has not called into action. In short when one sits down calmly and dispassionately reviews the history and doings of alcohol one feels very much like uttering the sentiments of the poet when he indignantly exclaims:

“Oh where shall fancy find a name,
To call thee by; expression of thy numerous ills,
Thou pregnant womb of horrors,
Of temper so transcendently malign,
That toads and serpents of most deadly kind,
Compared to thee,—were harmless.”

When alcohol is introduced into the system it begins its work of evil at once by vitiating the saliva of the mouth. The ptyaline, or principle in saliva which is intended, when mixed with the food during mastication, to act upon the starchy matters to effect their digestion, is so vitiated and changed as to be no more capable of performing that office. There is also a great tendency to putridity in consequence of this unnatural change which is the occasion of the foul fetid breath peculiar to spirit drinkers.