

Medical men should be explicit in their attempts to dispel these delusions."

Some time since I was much struck with the force of the following sentiments uttered in my hearing, by a lady in good society in this city. She said "If Doctors knew the terrible amount of harm they are doing by ordering their patients, especially ladies, to take beer, wine and spirits, causing, many to become fond of it, and to become addicted to habits of tipping, they would hesitate before prescribing it." That such a result has frequently followed its habitual use as a medicine, I am convinced, and I should be glad to see it discarded, and a class of remedies resorted to which could not prove worse or more fatal to the patient and to society than the disease itself.

I have known numerous cases in proof of this; and three lamentable instances in my own early practice are vividly impressed upon my recollection—two, the cases of married women who acquired the habit of tipping from the use of gin, prescribed medicinally by myself; and the other a young gentleman, who became a confirmed drinker from the use of bitter ale and porter, also prescribed medicinally. Nor am I at all singular in this, for other practitioners have made similar observations. This has been the case in the experience of Dr. Forbes Winslow, who asserts that during twenty years of practice, he has seen numerous cases of dipsomania (more particularly among women) which could only be traced to the injudicious use of stimulants, given in the first instance medicinally. He also dissents most strenuously from the stimulating theory of the late Dr. Todd, which like that of Mr. Skey, was based upon the assumption that all disease in one stage or another betokens debility, and that nearly all illnesses are preceded by, and, on critical enquiry, may be traced back to some depressing cause, some draught upon the bodily or mental health, which lowers the vital powers, and which in course of time, it may be days or weeks, may develop itself into an attack of illness of any form, and the large majority of which attacks are characterised by a weak pulse. "For this condition of (supposed) real weakness, says Mr. Skey, I prescribe wine as a prominent remedy, to be administered at intervals, more or less long, according to the necessities of the case." Now the above assumption itself any intelligent Physician must admit is pure empiricism, and the resulting theory incorrect; while the attempt to remove what Mr. Skey is pleased to assume to be "real weakness," by a "depressing agent," (which alcohol has been amply proven to be) is certainly a most fallacious and delusive theory of practice, which

too many really debilitated patients have experienced to their cost. Dr. Winslow also makes another important statement in point, when he remarks that "he had heard one of the most distinguished members of the Profession say after the death of Dr. Todd, that he was personally acquainted with many families who *cursed the day* that Dr. Todd entered the house" insinuating that chronic intemperance had been engendered by his too free administration of stimulants in disease. Dr. Wilks, of Guy's Hospital, condemns Mr. Skey's laudations of alcohol, and believes the teachings and treatment of the late Dr. Todd to have been "most pernicious" while he entirely dissents from the views entertained by the late Dr. Todd, Mr. Skey, and others who think with them, as to the necessity of stimulants in fever; and states that in his own wards in Guy's Hospital he treats fever *without stimulants* and *with the best results*. Dr. Wilks, in support of his action in signing the manifesto alluded to in the beginning of this article, instances the treatment of Bronchitis, especially, with stimulants, as *an error which kills many patients*, and deliberately reiterates as his opinion, that if alcohol is ever prescribed it should be *with the same care and judgment* as any other drug, such as iron, or quinine, and he might have added opium or arsenic, aconite or cannabis indica. The truth is, that the more one chooses to enquire into the subject, the more palpable does it appear how erroneous is the presumed therapeutic value, and how false the estimate usually set upon alcohol as a medicinal agent. Many still prejudiced in favour of the utility of alcohol as a medicine, have been constrained, from clinical observation, to *condemn without hesitation or qualification* the practice proposed by Brown, of the last century, and introduced by the late Dr. Todd, of giving alcoholics in all diseased conditions, including acute diseases; while as to his (Dr. Todd's) alleged success in fever cases, it is well known, that the Physician to whom he entrusted the analysis of his Hospital Reports asserts [see British Medical Journal, December 9th, 1865] that the mortality from fever in the hospital attended by Dr. Todd was *much greater than that of any other fever Hospital in Great Britain*. Notwithstanding the accumulating evidence against the theory of *stimulism*, so-called, it is not a little surprising with what tenacity many still cling to it, and this too in the face of the most uncontrovertible evidence, as elicited from an examination of Hospital Statistics, as in the case of the London Hospital, and in the observations made by Drs. Gardner and Russell, in the Glasgow Hospital, shewing that even