

which all tectotalers are under to the Committee of the Montreal Society for their noble exertions in the cause, and hope you will assist them to the utmost of your means to discharge their present liabilities.

SAMUEL BAKER, President.
Wm. MacCARY, Secretary.

We send you enclosed one pound five for the use of the Montreal Committee

Education.

FONDNESS FOR EXCITEMENT.

BY DR WM. A. ALCOTT.

No topic could be selected of greater importance to the young than that which is intended by the caption of this article. And if I should fail to make it appear so, let the blame fall on me—rather on my manner of handling the subject—and not on the subject itself which I have chosen.

When I speak of the love of excitement, however, I usually mean an undue or excessive love of it. To avoid excitement wholly, would be to go out of the world—and perhaps out of the universe. Air and water, in a sense, are excitants, although it is true that without them we could not survive a moment. But there is a wide difference between excitement and over excitement—or in other words, between a reasonable use of excitement, and excess in its use—induced by an undue fondness or love of it. Stimulus, stimulus! excitement, excitement! this is the universal cry.

This is an evil which prevails everywhere, and in almost every form. Nay, more; this undue fondness for excitement of body or mind, is not only everywhere prevalent, but everywhere increasing; and threats, unheeded and unopposed, the ruin of the whole rising generation. Against it, therefore, I feel compelled to lift up a warning voice. Let him hear, who hath ears.

Some there are who meet us at the threshold, by what they suppose to be an insurmountable difficulty, and gravely tell us that no line can be drawn between that amount, or degree, or kind of stimulus which is healthful, and that which is unhealthy or injurious. But this is a mistake. Excitants or stimuli cease to be healthful or salutary in their effects, precisely when and where they cease to invigorate body or mind, and when their effects begin to prove debilitating.

What, it will be asked, is the rule, then? Is it to make one's own experience his guide? I answer—yes, as far as our own experience goes. This, however—the experience of any one individual, I mean—will go but a little way. Much will remain very much, to be determined by the experience of others, and especially by those forms of experience which are embodied into science.

To make plain my meaning, take the case of alcoholic drinks. Now, there is a use of these drinks whose consequences in their direct effects on himself, no young man could mistake. The greatest ignoramus I have ever yet seen intoxicated, knew he had been too far—had indulged his love of excitement to excess—when fairly recovered to his former condition. The prodigal in the gospel understood perfectly well where he had been, when he "came to himself." And yet there are other uses of alcoholic drink, which, judging merely from one's own experience, produce no evil effects, but concerning which, science has told us, within a few years, a very different story.

Experience on a large scale, embodied into science—the sciences of chemistry, physiology, &c.—has told us that alcohol in every form and in every degree, when introduced into the healthy living human system, is a foe, and a foe continually, until it is expelled. And more than this, even; that its effects are permanent, and even transmissible to other and unborn generations. That though the use of a moderate quantity of wine, cider, beer, or diluted spirits, gives warmth, and strength, and activity at the time, yet it weakens body and mind both, in the end.

I do not deny that one's own experience, enlightened by the study of these sciences, would go very far towards enabling us to judge correctly on this subject. Indeed, this is what has just now been affirmed. As a student of chemistry and physiology, I know well, while under the influence of half a gill of toddy, a gill of wine, or a tumbler of beer or ale, that I have gone too far. I know

it by a debility of the heart and arteries. For what if these beat a little faster than usual? This does not indicate an increase, but a diminution of strength and vigor. The pulse in a fever, though more frequent than before, is not the stronger, but the weaker for it.

And here, by the way, I lay down one general rule, by means of which most persons may know when they have, and when they have not, passed the line of healthy excitement. I will not say that the rule admits of no exceptions, for, like most general rules, it may admit a few. The rule is this: As that which strengthens does not increase the activity of the heart and arteries, but on the contrary causes them to beat more full and strong, so that which weakens or debilitates, does increase this activity, and should therefore be avoided. Or if there seem one glaring exception to this rule, staring us full in the face—I allude to the effects of exercise—the rule may be modified a little: Whatever so increases the activity and strength of the pulse, as to be followed by a debility which, when the system is restored to its balance, is not fully removed, must be hurtful.

Need I say here, that all alcoholic drinks—down to the weakest home-brewed beer, if it has fermented at all—are of this description;—that tobacco is another; opium another; coffee another; tea another, &c. Every sensible young man who has used any of these, knows that they exhilarate him, yet he knows, too, that after having used them once, if he do not repeat his dose, he is ere long debilitated as the consequence of their use.

There is one law in operation here, which deserves to be better known to the young than it sometimes is. The smaller the amount of alcohol or stimulus which is taken into the system—provided it is enough to be at all appreciable—the greater the derangement, if not the debility which follows, in proportion to its quantity. Understand me, however, my young friends. I do not mean to say, or to intimate, that half a gill of small beer, or weak wine, will injure you as much as the same quantity of full proof rum, gin, or brandy; but only much more in proportion to the quantity of alcohol it contains.

To some, I am well aware, there will be nothing new in this last statement. To a few, however, the doctrine will be strange; and they will be disposed to ask, "How can these things be? How is it possible that a smaller dose of poison—for poison I take it to be—can affect the living system more injuriously, in proportion to its quantity, than a large one? Are beer, cider, wine, coffee, and tea, more injurious, then, in proportion to the amount of poisonous or medicinal substance they contain, than rum, gin, and brandy?" I answer, that they are so.

Do you wish for reasons? First, from the nature of the case, it must be so. The larger the quantity of poison we take, provided we do not take enough to overwhelm the powers of life at once, the more likely that there will be a reaction, and the offending substance will be thrown out of the system, either upward or downward. Whereas in the case of the very small quantity, the system is not so much disturbed, and the little taken steals its march, as it were, upon the system; and, becoming incorporated into it, has its full pernicious effect. Secondly, we establish this doctrine—which you are pleased to call a new or strange one—by analogy. If we wish to produce a merely local impression on the system, by some strong medicine—say calomel—we throw a pretty large dose, perhaps twelve or twenty grains into the stomach. A reaction soon follows, and it is thrown off. But if, on the contrary, our aim is to produce a general impression—in other words, if we wish to poison—salivate with it, we give half a grain, or a quarter of a grain. And this repetition, for a few times only, of these minuter doses, will bring about the result we desire. It is so with alcohol among the rest. For, what is alcohol but a medicine, wherever we find it?

I might add a third species of proof on this point, were further proof needful. They who use alcohol occasionally—say once in a month, or once in two months—and then use nothing but water the rest of the time, though they may, and doubtless do, injure themselves to the full extent which has ever, by any finite being, been supposed, do not, after all, impair their health, or diminish their longevity so much as those who sip a little every day, and yet are never disguised by it. Nor are the ill effects on the offspring of the former, so obvious as they are on those of the latter.

One remark might here be applied to all medicinal substances, from alcohol, opium, calomel, and tobacco, down to beer, coffee, tea, pepper, saleratus, vinegar, &c. The strength they give is not by adding nutriment to the system, but by exciting the nerves