

or congestion of the brain and its coverings, as also in similar affections of the cord, except in the stage of collapse, when its use becomes dependent upon the judgment of the practitioner. It is contra-indicated in functional and organic affections of the heart, in the former adding to the difficulty by inducing loss of muscular power, and in the latter case inducing fatal syncope. Its deleterious action upon the liver contra-indicates its use by persons laboring under such affections, and its action in promoting the formation of sugar by the liver is sufficient to contra-indicate its use in diabetes. In the form of gin, or malt liquors, it is especially hurtful by favoring congestion in Bright's disease; and in lung affections the facility with which it produces congestion of that organ causes it to be strongly contra-indicated. It is, therefore, found to be *not* a nitrogenous food or restorer of the system when reduced under the action of wasting disease, and *not* a carbonaceous food or heat producer; and it must also be adjudged contra-indicated in exalted functional or organic diseases of the brain, lungs, liver, kidneys, stomach and bowels. It remains now but to consider the propriety of its administration in low fever cases, and to nursing mothers.

There can be no doubt that a stimulating dose of alcohol may be used with advantage in cases of sudden faintness or temporary prostration where there is no loss of substance, and where the system merely requires to be roused to take care of itself. And it is useful also in cases of prostration from mechanical injuries and in fainting from loss of blood. It may even be resorted to with advantage in paroxysms of depression in fevers and lingering diseases, unattended with inflammatory action or important organic lesion. While externally as a spirit bath for restless children and infants, it is often serviceable, producing by its anæsthetic action upon the peripheral extremities of the nerves, a gently soothing anæsthetic effect, much more pleasing and satisfactory than that obtained by the use of opiates and soothing cordials. It is also useful externally, as a powerful sedative and soothing agent, acting, both by its anæsthetic influence and its evaporating tendency, as a sedative lotion. I can imagine a condition of feebleness of the digestive organs, where congestion is absent and there is no symptom of irritation, in which it may be of temporary benefit in promoting digestion; but of such cases Professor Laycock, M.D., thus speaks: "Indigestion, being temporarily relieved by alcoholic stimulants, it lays the foundation of an ever-growing habit of taking them in women, and excites a more and more urgent desire in the drunkard; and it is in this way that

many persons of position and education become irrecoverable sots." And upon this point Dr. Wilks, of Guy's Hospital, London, in his lectures on diseases of the nervous system, says: "I have seen so many cases of persons, especially ladies, who have entirely given themselves up to the pleasures of brandy drinking, become parapalegic; and from what we hear of our continental neighbours, it would seem that the diabolical compound styled *Absinthe*, is productive of exhaustion of nervous power in even a much more marked degree. It would seem that the volatile oils, dissolved in the alcohols, give additional force to its poisonous effects."*

As regards its value as a therapeutic agent in fever, two uses have been suggested for it as a medicine in this class of diseases; the one, that of a *fuel* to support animal heat when solid food cannot be taken; the other, that of an anæsthetic, like chloroform, which will prevent the destructive waste of the nervous system, as evidenced in low muttering delirium—the use, as it were, of a brake upon a car going down grade. My opinion in this case is, that *facts* are opposed to *fancy*, that milk, cracker, gruel, animal broths, fruit juices, grapes, unfermented wine, or even claret wine, would be better *fuel* than alcohol, and the old-fashioned spiritus mindererus and aromatic spirits of ammonia, are infinitely better as stimulants, while frequent sponging with cold or tepid water, cold affusions, (*Currie*), packing in cold wet sheet (*Brand*) immersion in cold bath 10° below temperature of body (*Murchison*), vinegar and water, or, (as there is no possible objection to its external use,) frequent spongings with the spirit bath (℞ j spirits vin. rec. to ℞ xvj. water) of Neligan, are infinitely preferable for soothing the nervous

* Dr. Amory, of Paris, "considers the symptoms induced by the use of *Absinthe Liqueur* as different from those induced by alcohol. In absinthism there being no paralysis but violent epileptiform convulsions; while, in alcoholism, paralysis is the prominent symptom." That alcohol does produce epileptiform convulsions, and favor them when established, I have had ample evidence in general practice. I have now in my mind two persons, one is peculiarly subject to epileptiform convulsions when intemperate, but when abstaining they become much less frequent, not appearing for a period of from six to eight months. A young man of good family has this summer been much given up to dissipation, which, after an excessive bout of drinking and abstinence from food for several days, has resulted in epileptiform convulsions of the most violent character, attended with loss of intellect for hours. Four of these have taken place in a single day. Abstinence from spirits, the use of food and liberal doses of ammonia bromide have arrested their appearance for weeks. At the time I write a return to his old habits has caused the fits, though not so severe or frequent, to re-appear.