

of every attempt which can be made to reclaim the ignorant and irreligious; and it is further stated, in language as strong as any sensible teetotaler has ever used in reference to the same subject, 'that something *must be done* to cast out the demon of drunkenness, before the drunkard is in a condition to hear even of Christ;' and it is further affirmed, 'that there are many, and even general classes of society, who are in a great measure inaccessible, through this very cause, to all the evangelistic efforts which have hitherto been attempted.' And let us listen to this home-thrust—a truth which abstainers have always proclaimed on the house-top, and for the proclamation of which they have been severely censured—'and yet,' continues the report, nevertheless of this fearful condition of things, churches, as such, can scarcely be said to have taken the subject very fully into their consideration, and still less to have provided, to any very noticeable extent, remedial means.' Thanks to the committee for their able report. But had the sentences we have quoted been uttered in the hearing of many rev. gentlemen by a total abstinence lecturer, they would probably have left under the impression that he was for supplementing the gospel, and doing all in his power to stigmatise the churches of Christ.—*Scottish Review.*

INTOXICATING DRINKS,

THEIR NATURE AND ADAPTATION TO MAN'S CONSTITUTION.

(From the *Scottish Temperance Review.*)

Adaptation is the order of nature; fitness and propriety reign throughout the universe; the beneficent spirit of Deity inter-penetrates and pervades all things; man alone, as he at present exists, forms an anomaly in the works of creation. The intelligent observer of nature finds nothing in all the objects that surround him but harmony and design; when, however, the same philosophic eye would study human nature, it meets with contrarieties and inconsistencies which it cannot account for. It finds man the creature of noble intellect, exalted high above the other tribes of sentient being which surround him, placed in the midst of a world teeming with blessings fitted to satisfy his every want, and yet, possessed as he is of such capacities, and supplied as he is with all the means of physical comfort, still crime and misery are inseparably associated with his character and history. And when the mental philosopher would attempt to explain, or account for such incongruities, according to those laws which regulate the phenomena of mind, it only becomes the more manifest that something has occurred to disturb that harmonious relation betwixt the moral and intellectual, which must have originally existed in man's constitution; for while he finds man capable of judging and generalizing from past experience, and so constituted that he cannot but approve of, and desire, the good thus perceived, yet, in working out the details of his character, he often finds him acting as if he possessed neither the one nor the other; and to no part of man's conduct do these remarks apply with greater force, than to the use of intoxicating drinks.

No doubt the drinking system has been originated and perpetuated in popular delusion; yet strange it is, that beings capable of reasoning and reflection from the past, should have so long mingled with the fearful consequences of intemperance, without perceiving that intoxicating drinks are neither adapted to man's organization, nor designed for this use, by the Author of nature. What we propose, then, in the following paper, is briefly to inquire into the nature of these drinks, and their adaptation to man's constitution.

The popular impression regarding the beneficial qualities of strong drink, could only have originated in mistaken views regarding the nature and properties of these drinks themselves. It was known that such drinks were extracted from wholesome and nutritious substances (such as barley), and hence, by a mistaken method of reasoning, it was briefly

concluded that the wholesome and nutritious properties of the barley were, just as it were, transmuted into intoxicating drink, and thus presented to the consumer in a more compendious form. Such an impression could only have arisen out of an entire ignorance of the first principles of chemical combination. The science of chemistry resolves all substances into what are termed simple elements, every substance being a simple element which resists further decomposition, and these simple elements forming the components of the whole of the physical creation. And it ought to be borne in mind, that the different qualities of different substances, depend not merely upon the different elements which enter into their combination, but also upon the different proportions and relations in which these elements are combined. Thus the atmosphere as it exists is beautifully adapted to man's organs of respiration; but let a portion of that atmosphere be subjected to chemical process, whereby its original constitution is destroyed, and a new combination formed, and that which was formerly the means of life, may thus be converted into the means of immediate and instantaneous death. Just so in the case before us; barley, as it comes from the hands of its Creator, is beautifully fitted to subserve the end of its being as an article of food; but let that barley be subjected to a wicked process of malting, mashing, brewing, and distilling, and the good creature of God is actually mangled and tortured out of itself. The original substance is destroyed, and a new combination formed, possessing not one quality in common with that from which it was extracted.

One of the most important features in this new-formed substance, termed alcohol, or spirits of wine, is its being an indigestible substance. This is a fact admitted both by chemists and physiologists, and it is a fact which, in our further consideration of alcohol, and its adaptation to our physical system, we would do well to carry along with us, as it will enable us to perceive the only uses to which such drinks can possibly be applied in the animal economy.

Digestion is that process by which the elements are dissolved, and the nutritive parts separated for the support and sustenance of our bodies. Thus food, when taken into the stomach, undergoes a variety of changes, and by every change is assimilated more and more to our bodies themselves, until it becomes incorporated with, and forms a part of, our physical constitution. Hence it is evident, that any substance which resists this action of the stomach, whatever may be its uses in the animal economy, cannot of itself add any real or permanent support to the system. Thus, when alcohol is taken into the stomach, the alarm is immediately sounded that an enemy has entered, and nature summons up all her powers in order to expel the intruder. Every faculty is thus strung up to its highest pitch. All the latent energies are brought into full and lively exercise: The heart beats higher, and the blood flows quicker, while strange thoughts flash through the mind, like lightning in a storm; and amid this wild play of physical and mental energy, the individual may imagine himself better and stronger than ever; but no sooner is the cause of this unnatural excitement expended, than he finds himself in a weak, emaciated, miserable condition—the natural result of thus outraging the laws of his being.

Here, then, we have the first result of using intoxicating drinks, viz., unnatural excitement; this excitement invariably followed by collapse or depression; while the uneasy sensations, consequent upon this latter condition, naturally induces a strong desire for fresh stimulants, which, if supplied, cannot fail to exhaust the excitability of the system—thus requiring both a repetition and an increase of the dose. Here, then, in the natural tendency of these drinks, is contained the whole philosophy of the drinking system—the grand rationale of that connection which exists between the moderate use of intoxicating drinks, and the formation of the drunken appetite.