

BLOOD LETTING.

The immediate effect of profuse and repeated bleeding, is exhaustion. While this exhaustion continues, there is a diminution of action of every kind, and hence an imposing appearance of relief to the symptoms of disease; but it no sooner takes place than an instinctive effort is made by the *vis medicatrix nature*, to remedy the evil hereby produced, and to restore the system to its former balance of power. This is called a rallying or reaction of the living principle. The arteries contract to adapt themselves to the measure of blood that remains: the sensorial organ is roused to the secretion of a large portion of nervous power to supply the inordinate drain that takes place during the general commotion; all is in a state of hurry and urgency, and for the most part irregularity of action, while the instinctive effort is proceeding.—And hence, no sooner is the immediate effect of prostration, exhaustion or syncope overcome, than the heat palpitates, the pulse beats forcibly with a jerking bound, the head throbs, the eyes flash fire, and the ears ring with unusual sounds. Now it often happens that these concurrent signs are mistaken for proofs of latent or increased vigor, instead of being merely proofs of increased action: and action, too, that adds as largely to the depletion that produced it; and the unhappy patient is bled a second, a third, and even the fourth time, till no reaction follows, at which time it is strangely supposed that the entona, plethora or inflammator diathesis is subdued and lulled into a calm; because the patient has been so far fatally drained of his living principle, that there is no rallying or reactive power remaining, and gives up the ghost, in a few hours, to the treatment, instead of the disease.—*Dr. Good's Study of Medicine.*

ALCOHOL AS A MEDICINE.

Professor Gibson, in a late Valedictory to the Graduates of the Philadelphia College of Medicine, used the following language:

"Within the last thirty years, a remarkable revolution has taken place in the customs of society, and in the practice of physicians. But the familiar and careless manner in which a large proportion of the members of the faculty continue to administer alcoholic drinks as a medicine, is highly reprehensible. In every direction around us we may meet with drunkards, whose steps were first turned aside from the path of safety by professional authority. And the mischief still goes on.—Distinguished practitioners, who have not studied the philosophy of habit, continue to scatter abroad the seeds of physical and moral death, with painful and inexcusable indifference. Blindly following the old and beaten track, they put the intoxicating cup to the lips of their patients, and consign to shame and ruin those whom they would heal and save.

The monstrous frauds that are practiced in

the manufacture of alcoholic drinks, present another objection to their medical use. Vinous and fermented liquors are more particularly the subject of adulteration and imposition. They are rarely what they pretend to be. If any other article in the *Materia Medica* were proved to be as commonly adulterated and impure as the various forms of alcoholic liquors, it would be banished at once and for ever from medical practice. And yet, many of our learned professors and distinguished practitioners will dose their patients from day to day, and from month to month, with these uncertain compounds; often, beyond a doubt, administering in this way, even in critical cases of disease, tobacco, cocculus indicus, and strychnia.

At best, alcoholic drinks are of doubtful efficacy in nearly all chronic diseases. They seldom effect a cure. Often they appear to keep the disease at bay, and, by the temporary relief they afford, to lure the patient with false hopes, and lead him to repeat and continue the remedy. But here it happens, too frequently, that the disease is gradually entrenching itself in the vital organs, while the medicine is steadily and stealthily performing its fatal operation. By heaping fuel on the fire, the flame is suppressed; but the fire is not quenched. Beneath the smouldering ruins, it kindles, and burrows, and consumes.

Your observation will point you to many illustrations of these remarks. How often do we meet a dyspeptic, who has been using alcohol as a remedy for ten or twenty years and whose disease is no better than when he took the first dose? And yet, these cases present the most favorable results. In the great majority of patients subjected to such treatment, death has interposed long before the lapse of ten or twenty years. Lurking in this treacherous remedy, he has thrown around his sleeping victim the charms of habit, stronger than adamant, and borne him off to a drunkard's grave. The few survivors, while they boast loudly of their temperance and self-control, and load with high honors, in every public bar-room where they resort for medicine, the name of the distinguished physician or professor whose prescription they pursue—exhibit, in the trembling hand, the puffy cheek and blear and bloodshot eye, sorrowful tokens of their own doom, and shameful evidences of the folly of their professional advisers. Any other form of medicine would be discarded in a week, if its healing virtues were not more evident. But the deluded victim of the alcoholic treatment, year after year, with admirable patience, persists in his favorite remedy, until naught remains of but him

"The withered form, the blasted mind,
The wreck by passion left behind;
A shrivelled scroll, a scattered leaf,
Sear'd by the autumn blast of grief?"

Ec. Rep. Am. Tem. Un.