

wife, instead of being fed at the expense of the country, been now moving in the first classes of society. Young men, you who are just starting in life, beware, beware, we say, of the "Social Glass."—*Olive Branch.*

Rum Sweats and Toddy Medicines.

At the late Convention, Gen. Fessenden spoke against the practice of using intoxicating liquors medicinally. We have repeatedly urged the same matter, and shown by high medical authority, that their use may not only be safely dispensed with, but that it is generally in itself injurious to the patient—always dangerous, and subject to much abuse. The matter is of sufficient importance to justify "line upon line and precept upon precept," until the good people shall consign it, as a relic of barbarism, to "that bourne from which no" *humbug* "returns." We were right glad to hear Gen. Fessenden denounce the practice in such plain terms. The question is of more importance than the more-talked-of topic of "unconstitutionality." We have nothing to fear on the latter point; but the other is fruitful of impediments to the advancement of total abstinence. "So long," says a gentleman at the head of one of our medical schools, "as alcohol finds a place in the sick chamber, so long there will be drunkards." Temperance men who would shrink with loathing from an invitation to swallow a glass of liquor as a beverage, will yet allow good old ladies and heedless doctors to wheedle them into the idea that "there's nothing like an old-fashioned rum-sweat;" "nothing like gin and molasses to break up a cold;" "nothing like brandy and loaf-sugar for bowel complaints;" and so on through the whole category of "ills that flesh is heir to." A man may keep himself steeped in "rum as a medicine," if he needs all these antiquated notions. There is no end to the excuses for "taking a drop;" but the Temperance man who makes use of these excuses is just no Temperance man at all. If it is to be practiced, let the whole figure be cut; do it up as the old toper did, whose physician prescribed rum for a dislocated shoulder, —he *drank* the rum on pretence that he could shake it into his shoulder, so that it would operate more forcibly than if applied externally. There's rum practice for you, as consistent as a majority of the cases. There was just about as much sense in the old fellow's logic, as there is in the reasons offered for the alcoholic medicines. Too often these reasons are patched up for the sole purpose of smuggling in a swig of "the ardent," at the expense of conscience and common sense. Many credulous souls in the Temperance ranks may honestly believe in the efficacy and indispensableness of alcoholic nostrums; such are to be pitied, as sadly behind the times. They will find an argument that their side of the question will depend too much upon the fact that their grand-mothers used rum for a medicine, and that the authority of experienced old ladies is enough for any body. But however much we may respect the good old creatures, we cannot allow that all their old notions will "stand fire." We haven't much faith in the efficacy or chalk-marks on the back of the chimney to remove warts, or in the necessity of nailing horse-shoes on the door to keep away witches. Nor do we imagine the practice, (in the good old days of going to mill on horse-back,) of placing the grist in one end of the bag and a large stone in the other to balance it, as altogether the best that could have been devised. We dislike innovation and favor "conservatism," with regard to every thing worth preserving; but this does not lead us to consider that the abolition of the practice of hanging witches was a very "fanatical" whim of reformers. The fanaticism was altogether on the other leg. So with the questions of our day, —we regard as the greatest fanatic the man who opposes the annihilation of grogshops, and clings to the antiquated notion that rum must be sold and drank now because it was sold and drank by our forefathers; that intemperance is a "necessary evil," resulting from the *abuse* rather than the

use of liquor; or to confine the question to the limits of our present discussion, that rum must be used as a medicine because our *foremothers* used it, and, in the language of a newspaper orator, "lived to a most numerous age." But perhaps the stickler for rum medicines may shelter himself under the wing of his doctor.—We care not for that. We came to the conclusion long ago, that Doctors are but men, and that their opinions are no more likely to be infallible than those of other mortals. The Doctor finds a rum potion set down in his old book, against a particular disease; that is enough for him, but it is not enough for us. When the art of distillation was first discovered, Alcohol was thought to be a grand panacea—a universal cure-all; and the present practice of prescribing it is simply the fag-end of that foolish notion. It may operate beneficially in some cases; but for these very cases there are substitutes almost without number, which would operate equally well, without the danger of creating a fatal appetite for stimulus, or awakening an appetite which it has cost much self-denial to renounce. Why do not physicians banish so prolific an agent in the creation of misery and vice from their practice? Simply because it is recognized among the medical agents of the old masters—they are backed by the books, and consider that a "knock-down argument." And doctors too generally belong to the stiff old order of "stick-in-the-mud" conservatives. But independent physicians are beginning to multiply, and medical authority strong enough may be quoted on our side of the question. The days of "rum as medicine," are numbered, and at the end of those days we may anticipate the triumph of total abstinence. But we are occupying too much space in this rambling talk, in which we have just touched upon the edges of the subject. We will strike deeper next time. The subject must be kept before the people till Temperance men are convinced of the inconsistency and ridiculous foolery of their harboring and using the spirit of evil as a panacea.—*Fountain and Journal.*

Spontaneous Combustion.

CHARLES DICKENS AND CAPTAIN MARRYATT.

A good deal of discussion, says the *Naval Chronicle*, has been caused in literary and medical circles by the incident in *Bleak House*, in which Mr. Dickens gets rid of Krook by what is called "spontaneous combustion." Mr. G. H. Lewes has taken the lead in impugning the possibility of such a case, and a great number of high authorities have been quoted both for and against. Mr. Dickens maintains his original position, and assures the dissentients that before adopting the notion, he "looked into a number of books, with great care, expressly to learn what the truth was. I examined the subject as a judge might have done, and without laying down any law upon the case."

But all these writers appear to think that this is the first time that such a tragedy has been introduced into fiction. They forget the death of *Jacob Faithful's* mother, and that Captain Marryatt stoutly insisted upon the occurrence of such catastrophes. *Jacob's* mother, it will be remembered, was an habitual drunkard, and her corpulence increased with her propensity to ardent spirits, until she became a "most unwieldy, bloated mountain of flesh." The story of her death is thus related:—

"One fine summer's evening, we were floating up with the tide, deeply laden with coals, to be delivered at the proprietor's wharf, some distance above Putney Bridge; a strong breeze sprang up, and checked our progress, and we could not, as we expected, gain the wharf that night. We were about a mile and a half above the bridge when the tide turned against us, and we dropped our anchor. My father, who, expecting to arrive that evening, had very unwillingly remained sober, waited until the lighter had swung to the stream, and then saying to me, 'remember,