

lessness producing all the evils of insufficient nutrition on the brain. "All the causes," says Dr. Bucknell, in a recent article in the *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, "even of the acute forms of insanity, point to an interference with the due nutrition of the brain. Starvation causes raving delirium, mortification produces muttering delirium. * * * If anything is positively known of the brain and its functions, it is that it expends its powers during the waking state; and that it is nourished and its powers are recruited by cell-growth, or otherwise, during sleep, * * * and during the prodromic period of threatened insanity, opiates often acts like a charm."* That alcohol does act narcotically, especially if combined with another narcotic, such as that of hop, requires no proof. It is an admitted fact, and now we are in a position to perceive how it is that the English and the Germans are a fat race, while the French and the Scotch are lean. The former drink beer, which contains about the same amount of alcohol as the light French wines, but in combination with a narcotic and nutritive extract to the extent of from 4 to 8 per cent. While in milk, the model food, the nutritive matter is about 12 per cent. So that a pint and half of good beer is equal, in respect of solid nourishment alone, to a pint of milk. But it has this immense advantage over milk, that it soothes the over-active nervous system at the very instant that it presents to it its means of nourishment. It cherishes and nourishes at once. Shall we then, misled by the crude speculations of modern chemists, reject the evidence of all history in favor of the mighty boon conferred by Bacchus on our race? When we reflect that in the present age the work is done more with the brain and the nerves, than with the muscles and the bones, that we have now bones of iron and muscles of steam, which relieve to a great extent those of the human frame, and that this substitution is daily progressing; while, on the other hand, the strain upon the mental

and cerebral system is proportionally increased, for we cannot multiply brains by any process of machinery yet invented, and that this very liberation from the toil of the hands begets greater and greater competition in the race of mental achievement; when we reflect on all this, is there not something very presumptuous in venturing against the most advanced investigations of physiology, to enforce more than monastic asceticism upon those who instead of the dawdling life of the monastery, with the trifling expenditure of its hibernating existence, have daily to undergo a waste of cerebral and nervous matter in the furnace of a city, to an amount hitherto unknown in the annals of our race? If we forbid alcohol in all its forms, is there not a danger of our starving the brains and the nerves? May not a portion of this substance be absolutely necessary for those who like pleaders have to go through a work of intense cerebration, so to speak for hours together? Certainly in my own practice I have met with many instances where the health was kept in a state of deterioration by abstaining from alcoholic drink, and where the addition of a glass of ale or a glass of wine permanently improved the health and comfort of the persons; and I believe, notwithstanding all the averments of the teetotalers, will contribute to the prolongation of a life it has already made happier. There is wisdom in the adage that wine is the old man's milk.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

In press, to be published soon, *Homeopathy Explained, and Homeopathy versus Allopathy*, by J. C. Peterson, M.D., of St. Johns.—*New Brunswick.*

PHYSICIANS have been tinkering the human body for about two thousand years to cure disease; and the result of all their labors is, that brimstone, mercury, and the lancet, are the only specifics. Diseases remain what they ever were.

LACON.

* Brit. and Foreign Med. Chirurg. Rev., Jan. 1855.