

gether only 2s. 8d. a gallon, it undersells and thus drives out of the market genuine Irish whiskey worth 6s., besides bringing a bad name on Irish distillers. The Scotchmen repel the imputation that "silent" spirit is deleterious. They admit that a vast deal of "blending" does take place, but they say the Irish spirit is thereby "improved." The *London Times*, in a long article, in which it gives prominence and precedence to the Irish case, presents various facts of interest and importance to the public, especially the consumers of Irish whiskey—a beverage which, as far as the British islands are concerned, has long been exceedingly popular.

Entering first on a lucid description of distillation in general, the *Times* writer notes that a large number of vegetable substances can be made to yield ardent spirit. This spirit, when prepared by any of the simple stills formerly in exclusive use, contains not only alcohol, the common basis of all spirit, mingled with more or less water, but an admixture of other ingredients, mostly oils, acids, ethers, or analogous compounds, which are soluble in the diluted alcohol, and which are in every case characteristic of the source from which the distillate is obtained. Of course the alcohol and the water are invariably present. But the other ingredients constitute the flavoring matter by which any one kind of spirits is distinguished from other kinds, and by which it possesses its special properties. Thus spirit distilled from the grape contains the ceananthic ether or oil of wine; spirit distilled from corn contains fusel oil; spirit distilled from molasses, beet root, or potatoes contains substances proper to its raw material. An experienced person has no difficulty in declaring, by smell or taste, the source from which any sample of recent spirit has been obtained. The crude, or new spirit, as it comes from an old fashioned still, is never fit for human consumption. In some instances the essential oils brought over with the distillate are so noxious in their character, or so excessive in quantity, or so unpleasant in flavor, that it is necessary to remove them by rectification, which is a process of re-distillation, after admixture with substances calculated to fix and retain the oils. In other instances the oils, although unpleasant at first, undergo oxidation or other chymical changes in course of time, and pass into new compounds of an agreeable character. This process under ordinary conditions occurs but slowly, and hence *old spirits* like old wines, have come to be the most highly and deservedly esteemed. Irish whiskey, when genuine, is prepared in old fashioned stills, called "pot" stills, by distillation from a mash made partly from malted and partly from unmalted barley. The process is so managed as to bring over a product of the proper fineness loaded with only so much essential oil as will undergo the desired changes in a reasonable time. The new spirit is then stored in old sherry casks, from which it derives some additional flavor, and also its well-known yellowish tint, and it is kept in bond generally for about three years. By the end of that time the fusel oil which it once contained has undergone conversion into other and innoxious compounds, and the result, the real Dublin whiskey, is a spirit singularly

free from any tendency to produce acidity, and flavored, in a manner highly esteemed by connoisseurs, with the products of the gradual and spontaneous decomposition of its fusel oil. From whiskey made and treated as described, the bulk of the fusel oil generally disappears in about twelve months, although the spirit continues to undergo beneficial changes for a much longer time. The great sale of Dublin whiskey, caused by the excellence of the article, led the dealers or middlemen to cast about for fresh sources of supply, and in the year 1860 an Act of Parliament helped their endeavors by giving permission to mix or "blend" spirits in bond. Previously a cask of whiskey purchased from a distiller could not be tampered with until the purchaser had paid the duty and carried the cask away. The large amount of capital which would have been locked up in duty prevented adulteration on an extensive scale. Since 1860, however, the dealers have been able to work their will with spirit in the Government ware-houses, and their mixtures have been sent out as Irish or Dublin whiskey.

This brings us to the article called "silent" spirit, so called presumably because it tells no tales with regard to the materials from which it is derived. It seems that some years ago, a Mr. Coffy invented and patented a still which may be worked in such a manner as to bring over only a very small quantity of fusel oil and analogous substances, or in such a manner as to bring over none at all, the product being then pure diluted alcohol, like the "rectified spirit of wine" which is sold by druggists. This silent spirit is now imported from Scotland in such quantities that a "blend" made in the Dublin Custom house in December, 1875, contained 1,162 gallons of silent spirit imported from Glasgow, two quantities of silent spirit, respectively of 2,120 gallons and of 2,989 gallons, imported from different houses in Edinburgh, 1,623 gallons of silent spirit from Cameron Bridge, and 298 gallons of silent spirit manufactured at Derry. In the whole 8,192 gallons there was nothing but silent spirit, not one drop of anything which could properly be called whiskey, and very little that was even of Irish manufacture. Yet the whole quantity was exported from the Dublin Custom house as "Dublin whiskey." The dealers who carry on these practices contend that the Irish whiskey owes a great part of its peculiar flavor to the fusel oil which it contains, from which impurity the Scotch silent spirit is nearly free. On this point the *Times* remarks:

"The dealers or middlemen, who intervene between the great Irish distillers and consumers, in these pleas lose sight, or they wish the public to lose sight, of two chief elements in the question. It is quite certain that genuine whiskey, when it is new, contains fusel oil, and that fusel oil is deleterious to man. But genuine whiskey, when it is no longer new, ceases to contain fusel oil; and its peculiar flavor, which is not deleterious, is a product of the decomposition of fusel oil, and is itself an evidence that this oil, which was once there, has ceased to exist. On the other hand, the silent spirit, which is pure in the chymical sense, is undrinkable in its pure state, because, although it is hot in the mouth, it is in other respects tasteless. In order to render it marketable it

must be doctored into some resemblance to the flavor of genuine Irish whiskey, and its eventual qualities will depend upon the ingredients which are employed for this purpose. Who can pretend to say what these ingredients are, or what may be their effects, seeing that each dealer may work by his own recipe and may have special secrets of his own? Considering that the ordinary basis of the manufacture is silent spirit of known value, it may be presumed that variations of price are mainly due to variations in cost of flavoring matter, or to variations in the time which different kinds of flavoring matter require before the mixture is ready to be sent out. It is supposed that the thousands of butts of a vile compound called Hamburg Sherry which annually pass through the English Custom House, on their way to Ireland, are fortified with silent spirit and returned to England under the name of Irish whiskey."

The *Times* calls for a sound Adulteration Act, and adverts to the fact that the poisons which are added to dilute alcohol to conceal its weakness and render it intoxicating produce a drunkenness of a more hurtful and hopeless kind than that which is produced by alcohol itself. On account of extensive adulterations the spirit called "Geneva" and ultimately "gin," fell into disrepute with respectable people. The name of "blue ruin" was fastened on it, and the phrase "gin-drinker" became a synonym for degradation. Whiskey is a perfectly definite fluid with characters of its own, and those who desire to purchase it ought to be protected against fraudulent imitations. The London correspondent of the *Scotsman* says that a vigorous effort is to be made to stop the blending of spirits in bond, and is sarcastic on "Irish Home Rulers and other patriots" who want to prevent competition between Irish and Scotch "whiskey." These "patriots," he complains, want to compel the public to buy Irish whiskey unrelieved by any spirit, which "improves its character and flavor." This, in view of the "blend" above noticed, is certainly a comical way of putting the Scotch case. But, if there are consumers who like to drink "silent" spirit variously flavored, they are free to indulge themselves. Only let their delectable compounds be sold under their own name, and not under a name covering misrepresentation and deceit.

The first part of what Sheridan said of Lord Dundas, that he depended on his imagination for his facts, and on his memory for his wit, may be applied as a compliment to the correspondent of the *New York Herald* at Ottawa. On the first instant he sends to that paper news of what is headed "Failure of a Canadian Bank," and quotes from the memorandum of approximate value of assets and liabilities of the Metropolitan Bank in its recent private report to the shareholders as to its present condition. We have to inform our worthy exchange that the Metropolitan Bank has not suspended, is paying over its counter all claims and receiving deposits and payments of bills as is usual with solvent banks. Its unimpaired capital paid up is \$500,000, and the lawful call of 10 per cent on the unpaid balance of stock is about being made. This call may be repeated monthly until the Bank has re-acquired the amount of its for-