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MEDICAL TESTIMONY.

The following testimonies were collected and published by the celebrated and indefatigable E. C. DELAVAN, in answer to a young doctor in Albany, who maintained that alcoholic drinks should not be called poisonous, and that their moderate use is in no degree injurious to the human constitution. We know not how the physician in question felt when he saw this noble array of authorities.

Says Doct. Thomas D. Mitchell: The "drunkard who would wish to reform, must bid an everlasting farewell to every liquid that has the power to intoxicate or poison."

Dr. Gordon: "It would be difficult to find a more destructive poison than ardent spirits."

Dr. Ure: "It has been the Aqua Mortis, (the water of death,) to myriads of the human race."

Dr. Cheyne: "Ardent spirits are very destructive to health, and may be deemed a poison. Writers upon Toxicology include ardent spirits in the list of poisonous substances."

Dr. Alden; "On every organ they touch, they operate as poison."

Dr. Harley: "I cannot hesitate to recommend the entire disuse of such a poison, rather than incur the risk necessarily connected with its moderate use."

Dr. R. G. Dods: Q. "Do you consider spirits properly designated as a poison?"

A. "Under a proper explanation of the term they may be justly called poison; they are ranked by writers on medical jurisprudence among the narcotics—'acid poisons.'" Small quantities seldom produce effects which the patient thinks to be hurtful; but if repeated, they always prove more or less injurious. The morbid appearances seen after death, occasioned by ardent spirits, exactly agree with those which result from poisoning."

Dr. Kirk: "What is the nature of ardent spirits? All of them contain as their basis, alcohol—a narcotic stimulant possessing properties of the kind that opium does—which you know to be a 'poison,'—with this addition, that it is more immediately irritating to the tissues of the body to which it is applied, than opium is."

Dr. E. Johnson: "What is poison? It is any substance which, when taken into the system, has the effect of disordering some of the actions which make up the sum of life. Aye, but you may say, it is only poisonous when taken in sufficient quantity. True, as regards the immediate destruction of human life; neither is prussic acid, nor arsenic, nor mercury, nor opium. Prussic acid, therefore, and spirit are equally poisonous, though neither will destroy life unless in sufficient quantity."

"We have irrefragable proof that spirit is a poison of the very same nature as prussic acid, producing the same effects, killing by the same means, paralyzing the muscles of respiration, and so preventing the necessary change of black into vermilion blood."

Dr. Alden: "On every organ they touch, they operate as a poison; they tend directly to induce disease, and shorten human life."

Dr. Paris, in his new classification of poisons, places it with "acid poisons."

Mr. Brodie proved by experiments on animals, that "alcohol and prussic acid were similar in their effects."

Dr. Farr, on reading to him by the committee of the House of Commons, the testimony of nearly five hundred distinguished medical men, who certify "that ardent spirit is ascertained by medical science to be in a strict sense a poison, and that its use as an article of diet is the direct cause of an appalling amount of disease and death," said "it is strictly so in regard to the destruction of life."

Forty-five physicians of Ohio: "It is equally poisonous with arsenic, operating sometimes more slowly but with equal certainty."

Dr. R. D. Mussey: "What is a poison? It is that substance, in whatever form it may be, which, when applied to a living surface, disconcerts and disturbs life's healthy movements."

"It may, indeed, be mixed with nutritious substances; but if it goes into the blood, it is thrown off as soon as the system can accomplish its deliverance."

"Now, such a poison is alcohol. Such in all its forms, mix it up in what you may. The same is true of arsenic or corrosive sublimate."

"That a person may be in the habit of taking it, and may yet survive and enjoy tolerable health, is no proof that it is not a poison. Will any man pretend to deny that arsenic is a poison, and a very strong poison? Yet, there are in Germany a number of farmers who are in the habit of making a daily use of arsenic."

"One man carried this habit so far, as to take two grains of arsenic into his system every day, and said that he could by no means dispense with it. Yet does any man believe that an individual may indulge in such a habit and not have his life shortened by it?"

"Men should clearly understand the distinction between nutriment and poison; and if much poison does much harm a little poison does a little harm. And under the same circumstances of constitution, the operation of poison will be uniform."

Says Dr. H. Green: "Alcohol, in all its forms, is to be regarded as the most virulent poison."

Dr. Nott: "That pure alcohol is poison, is an admitted fact."

Dr. Sprague: "Do you make the poison, or do you use it, or do you sell it?"

Dr. Horatio Potter: "The testimony of physicians is uniform and unequivocal. They pronounce alcohol a poison. They tell us that it is so considered and classed by all writers on *Materia Medica*, and they will even point out the precise place which it occupies among the 'vegetable narcotic poisons.'"

What the known qualities of alcoholic drinks are, is then settled, and settled by authority.

Alcohol is poison, and alcoholic drinks are *alcoholic poisons*; and being so, the next inquiry is *whether* such poisons must produce disease of the stomach, when used habitually?

Dr. Frank, "Their tendency, when used even moderately is to induce disease, premature old age, and death."

Dr. Emlen, "All use of ardent spirits (i. e. as a drink) is an abuse. They are mischievous under all circumstances."

—"Half the men every year who die of fevers might recover had they not been in the habit of using ardent spirits, and many a man who was never intoxicated,