

definite poison in the form of fusel oil.

There is no disguising the fact that alcohol is of late years less used by the medical profession. It has a certain position as a medicine; that no one will dispute. But looking back over hospital records for the past twenty-five years, there is little question that the use of alcohol is diminishing.

In the first place, some people say, 'Alcohol is a most excellent appetizer. There can be no possible harm in a little before a meal. It is, as the French say, an aperitif and helps digestion.' What are the facts? First of all, no appetite needs to be artificially stimulated. There is no need, supposing this property of alcohol to be true, to use anything that will excite an appetite. So that on that ground I do not think there is much to be made out for its use. Dr. Rolleston, writing in Allbutt's 'System of Medicine,' says that alcohol 'hinders artificial digestion.'

Then it is said that it is strengthening, and that it gives great working power. We hear a great deal of this in the advocacy of British beef and beer. That sounds very well, but let us view the facts. Alcohol modifies certain constituents of the blood, and on this account and on others, it affects prejudicially the nourishment of the body. It is said 'to diminish the metabolism of the tissues' or to lessen the activity of those changes by which the body is built up. The output of carbonic acid from the lungs is much lessened. The drinker invariably becomes ill-nourished. No man dreams of going into training and taking but a minimum of alcohol. Alcohol has undoubtedly a stimulating effect, and that is the unfortunate part of it. The effect, however, lasts only for a moment, and after it has passed away the capacity for work falls. It does this: it brings up the reserve forces of the body and throws them into action, with the result that when these are used up there is nothing to fall back upon. Its effect is precisely like a general throwing the bulk of his army into the fray and then bringing up, so far as he can all his reserves, and throwing them in also. The immediate effect may be impressive, but the inevitable result is obvious. As a work producer alcohol is exceedingly extravagant, and, like other extravagant measures, it is apt to lead to a physical bankruptcy. It is well known that troops cannot march on alcohol. I was with the relief column that moved on to Ladysmith. It was an exceedingly trying time apart from the heat of the weather. In that column of some 30,000 men, the first who dropped out were not the tall men, or the short men, or the big men, or the little men—but the drinkers, and they dropped out as clearly as if they had been labelled with a big letter on their backs.

With regard to the circulation, alcohol produces an increased heart-beat, a fuller pulse, and a redder skin. It calls upon the reserve power of the organ, but the moment the effect has passed off, the action of the heart is actually weakened. Consequently, the temporary effect is produced at an unfortunate cost. Then there is its action on the central nervous system. 'Here,' writes the authority already quoted, 'it acts directly on the nerve cells as a functional poison.' It first stimulates the nervous system and then depresses it; and, as with other poisons which act upon this part of the body, the higher centres are affected first. They become a little dull—a little less quick and acute. It may be very trifling, but there it is; so that the man who does his work on alcohol—even on a moderate amount—is not at his best.

Alcohol is certainly inconsistent with what might be called fine work. It is inconsistent with a surgeon's work, and with anything that requires a quick, accurate, and alert judgment. I am much struck with the fact that many professional men have discontinued the use of stimulants in the middle of the day. Why? For no other reason, probably, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, than that they find they can work better without it.

'Oh, it is an excellent protection against cold. If you are going into the cold air, you ought to take a little "nip" of something. It does keep out the cold.' This argument is used so often that even medical men would

sometimes seem almost to believe it. I can answer this impression with a quotation from the authority above named, that 'alcohol tends to lower the temperature by increased loss of heat, and to some extent by lessened oxidation, while the power of the body to resist cold is much reduced by it.' That answers this particular argument, which, as you know is one of the most potent circumstances under which alcohol is used in England.

There is a great desire on the part of all young men to be 'fit.' A young man cannot be fit if he takes alcohol. By no possibility can he want it. No one who is young and healthy can want alcohol any more than he can want strychnine.

In conclusion let me add one little testimony. Having spent the greater part of my life in operating, I can assure you that the person of all others that I dread to see enter the operating theatre is the drinker. I share with the late Sir James Paget his absolute dread of the secret drinker.

Peggy's Cabin.

Peggy O'Neill was an old woman who supplied us with milk during the summer we spent in Ireland. She was a tidy little body, with bright blue eyes and gray hair. She lived alone in a thatched cottage, only one room, and only one slit in the back wall to let in the light. It was clean enough inside, but almost dark when the door was shut.

We did not return to Ireland for two years, but when we came to Peggy's cabin we saw a great change. It had four windows with glass panes now. Peggy came out to see us, and saw that we were surprised at the improvement.

'Is it the window, sur? Yes, sur, it is a vast improvement, but it was not for meself I cared, but my brother died, and I brought home his little girl, and she has a broken back—God bless her!—and she has to lie in her bed all day, poor cratur.'

'Then I said to myself, "This dark cabin is all the world she has, poor dear," and so I saved money and put a window in the west wall, and let in the fields and the sheep upon her. She lies and looks out to the sheep and lambs all day, bless her heart. Then I cut one more window in the east wall, and let in the sea, and she sees the ships now, bless her soul.'

'And after that I said to myself—"I'll cut a window in the roof and she will see the stars at night," and so the heavens above are let in upon her too, glory be to God. And so the world is bigger for her although she has to lie in bed with a broken back.'

What a profound lesson I got from old Peggy's plan of letting in the beautiful things of God's making to the little invalid's room. To many of us our lives are narrow and uninteresting and monotonous. We are apt to mope and repine at our lot. The remedy is to cut windows in the walls of our life and let the light in.—Friendly Greetings.

Religious Notes.

'Kaukab i Hind,' published at Lucknow, says that 'at length, after forty-five years of missionary service, the Hon. and Rev. W. Miller, LL.D., C.I.E., is retiring to Scotland at the age of sixty-nine years. As a student he stood the first of his year in the university, and on coming out to Madras speedily acquired the reputation of a teacher of rare genius. He not only taught, but he planned education with statesmanlike comprehension, and may, without exaggeration, be called the greatest educationalist India has had. Scorning to compare the Free Church Institution and College with the Presidency College, he quickly, by sheer teaching power and force of character, raised it well above the government institution. He conceived the idea of a united Christian college for all the educational missions, and the Madras Christian College, first and greatest of its class, was the result. Doctor Miller possesses large private means which he has spent without ostentation as freely as his time and strength on the college and the mission. Consistently from the commencement

of his career, Doctor Miller has admitted that his calling as an educational missionary is inferior to the calling of evangelical missionaries. He has rendered great services to government, which have been worthily acknowledged; and public estimation has expressed itself in the form of the only statue erected to the honor of a missionary in India.'

The Rev. J. J. Lucas, from Allahabad, tells of the province of Agra and Oudh:

(1) In a population of over 47,000,000 Hindus and Mohammedans there are 119 ordained foreign missionaries; 158 ordained Indian ministers; 1,004 unordained preachers; 167 single women missionaries and 1,520 Indian Christian women employed as teachers, Bible women, etc.

(2) In 15 of the 48 districts, containing a population of over 15,000,000 Hindus and Mohammedans, there are no foreign missionaries, and in 5 districts, with a population of 5,442,000, there are neither foreign missionaries, nor ordained Indian ministers, while in the two native states, included in the census of the province, there is no foreign missionary and only 1 Indian minister.

(3) In the whole province are 105,521 towns and villages, and from a study of the mission reports it is clear that in 50,000 of them the Gospel has not been preached for a year past, and in many thousands of villages it has never been preached.—'Missionary Review of the World.'

The first general conference of Greek evangelical workers ever held took place at the Bible House, Constantinople, June 7th to 14th. Invitations had been issued by the Greek Evangelical Church of Constantinople to all the Greek congregations in Turkey and Greece, and even to that in Lowell, Mass., to send representatives to this gathering. Circumstances kept the attendance low, but delegates were present from Marsovan, Ordoo, and Ala Cham, in Northern Asia Minor; Saronica and Drama, in Macedonia; Athens, Greece, and the island of Cyprus. Prominent among the delegates were the Rev. Dr. Kalopothakes, of Athens, the pastor of these modern Greeks, still hale and active despite his eighty-five strenuous years. This was purely a conference, yet it will doubtless result in action when its conclusions are taken up officially by the various churches. Some of the topics presented for discussion were: Methods of co-operation, Revision of the Greek Hymn Book, Compiling of an Evangelical Greek Catechism, Improvement of the Sunday-school, etc. After a full and frank statement of the varying conditions, certain things were settled as desirable. It was recommended that four local unions be organized, centering, respectively, at Ordoo, on the Black Sea, Constantinople, Smyra, and Athens, and that these four unions be bound together in a single alliance or larger union, with perhaps triennial gatherings in some central place.—'Missionary Review of the World.'

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