

MEDICAL TESTIMONY ON ALCOHOL.

Dr. Ezra M. Hunt says: "The capacity of the alcohols for impairment of functions and the initiation and promotion of organic lesions in vital parts, is unsurpassed by any record in the whole range of medicine. The facts as to this are so indisputable, and so far granted by the profession, as to be no longer debatable. Changes in stomach and liver, in kidneys and lungs, in the blood-vessels to the minutest capillary, and in the blood to the smallest red and white blood disc disturbances of secretion, fibroid and fatty degenerations in almost every organ, impairment of muscular power, impressions so profound on both nervous systems as to be often toxic these, and such as these, are the oft manifested results. And these are not confined to those called intemperate."

Professor Youmans says: "It is evident that, so far from being the conservator of health, alcohol is an active and powerful cause of disease, interfering, as it does, with the respiration, the circulation and the nutrition; now, is any other result possible?"

Dr. F.R. Lees says: "That alcohol should contribute to the fattening process under certain conditions, and produce in drinkers fatty degeneration of the blood, follows, as a matter of course, since, on the one hand, we have an agent that retains waste matter by lowering the nutritive and excretory functions, and on the other, a direct poisoner of the vesicles of the vital stream."

Dr. Henry Monroe says: "There is no kind of tissue, whether healthy or morbid, that may not undergo fatty degeneration; and there is no organic disease so troublesome to the medical man, or so difficult of cure. If, by the aid of the microscope, we examine a very fine section of muscle taken from a person in good health, we find the muscles firm, elastic and of a bright red color, made up of parallel fibres, with beautiful crossings or striae; but, if we similarly examine the muscle of a man who leads an idle, sedentary life, and indulges in intoxicating drinks, we detect, at once, a pale, flabby, inelastic, oily appearance. Alcoholic narcotization appears to produce this peculiar conditions of the tissues more than any other agent with which we are acquainted. 'Three-quarters of the chronic illness which the medical man has to treat,' says Dr. Chambers, 'are occasioned by this disease.' The eminent French analytical chemist, Lecanu, found as much as one hundred and seventeen parts of fat in one thousand parts of a drunkard's blood, the highest estimate of the quantity in health being eight and one-quarter parts, while the ordinary quantity is not more than two or three parts, so that the blood of the drunkard contains forty times in excess of the ordinary quantity."

Dr. Hammond, who has written, in partial defense of alcohol as containing a food

power, says: "When I say that it, of all other causes, is most prolific in exciting derangements of the brain, the spinal cord and the nerves, I make a statement which my own experience shows to be correct."

Another eminent physician says of alcohol: "It substitutes suppuration for growth. It helps time to produce the effects of age; and, in a word, is the genius of degeneration."

Dr. Monroe, from whom "Alcohol, taken in small quantities, or largely diluted, as in the form of beer, causes the stomach gradually to lose its tone, and makes it dependent upon artificial stimulus. Atony, or want of tone of the stomach, gradually supervenes, and incurable disorder of health results. Should a dose of alcoholic drink be taken daily, the heart will very often become hypertrophied, or enlarged throughout. Indeed, it is painful to witness how many persons are actually laboring under disease of the heart, owing chiefly to the use of alcoholic liquors."

Dr. T.K. Chambers, physician to the Prince of Wales, says: "Alcohol is really the most ungenerous diet there is. It impoverishes the blood, and there is no surer road to that degeneration of muscular fibre so much to be feared; and in heart disease it is more especially hurtful, by quickening the beat, causing capillary congestion and irregular circulation, and thus mechanically inducing dilatation."

Sir Henry Thompson, a distinguished surgeon, says: "Don't take your daily wine under any pretext of its doing you good. Take it frankly as a luxury one which must be paid for, by some persons very lightly, by some at a high price, but always to be paid for. And, mostly, some loss of health, or of mental power, or of calmness of temper, or of judgment, is the price."

Dr. Charles Jewett says: "The late Prof. Parks, of England, in his great work on Hygiene, has effectually disposed of the notion, long and very generally entertained, that alcohol is a valuable prophylactic where a bad climate, bad water and other conditions unfavorable to health, exist; and an unfortunate experiment with the article, in the Union army, on the banks of the Chickahominy, in the year 1863, proved conclusively that, instead of guarding the human constitution against the influence of agencies hostile to health, its use gives to them additional force. The medical history of the British army in India teaches the same lesson."

But why present farther testimony? Is not the evidence complete? To the man who values good health; who would not lay the foundation for disease and suffering in his later years, we need not offer a single additional argument in favor of

entire abstinence from alcoholic drinks. He will eschew them as poisons.