

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

Intemperance as a cause of disease

SUBMITTED TO THE

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BY

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OF

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Gentlemen

In selecting the subject of intemperance as a cause of disease I do not mean to infer that I am guilty myself and want to speak of others faults.

I select it because I know something of its bad effect on the human system and see every day demonstration of the facts that I shall endeavour to detail.

A modern Author has observed that temperance and exercise are the two best Physicians in the world.

He might have truly added that if these were duly regarded there would be but little business for any others. But they

are not. Hence the great ~~num~~ ^{ti}ber of Proactioners required to ~~make~~ ^{make} up old remnants of Constitutions which have been torn down by the various forms of Intemperance as it exists among the human family. If we were to judge from mans actions it would appear that he thought his stay in this world too long and solisited the approach of death by trampling the laws of nature as it were under his feet. The danger of Intemperance is explained in the very construction of the human body. Health depends on that state of the solids and fluids which fits them for the proper performance of the vital func-

23

tions. While these go regularly on the individual is free from disease but whatever disturbs this necessarily impairs health. Intemperance never fails to derange the whole animal organism. It disturbs digestion, relaxes the nervous system, renders the different secretions irregular, vitiates the fluids, and in these ways occasions numberless diseases which are often incurable. The analogy between the nourishment of animals & vegetables affords a striking example of the effects of Intemperance. Moisture & manure greatly promote vegetation yet an over supply of either will destroy this process. So it is with

21
the human subject. A reasonable quantity of aliment is requisite to the preservation of life & health but an excess often brings on disease & death. Hence we see that the highest degree of human wisdom consists in regulating our appetites and passions so as to avoid all extremes. It is this that entitles us to the character of rational beings. The slave of appetite will ever be a disgrace to human nature. The Author of nature has endowed us with passions for the propagation of our species, the preservation of the individual, &c. An excessive indulgence in these is a form of intemperance which begets malignant

diseases: such as syphilis, gon-
^{orrhoea}orrhoea, spermatorrhea &c &c;

Man not content with the
satisfying the simple calls
of nature, create artificial
wants and are continually
in search of something to sat-
isfy them. But imaginary wa-
nts can never be gratified.

Nature is content with little,
but luxury knows no bounds.

Hence the epicures, the drunkards,
& debauchees seldom stop in their
career until their money or con-
stitution fails then indeed, &
seldom till then they see the
evil of their course. But alas!
it is too late to call back their
former fortune or that noble
constitution the value of which

in its normal condition can not be estimated.

It is impossible to lay down any fixed rules with regard to diet but every rational being knows what is ment by experience and it is in the power of everyone to avoid all extremes.

The best rule however is to study simplicity. Nature delights in the most plain and simple food and every animal except man follows her dictates.

Man alone ransacks the whole creation in quest of luxuries to satiate his fictitious appetites which is always at expense of his own well-being.

When we see a fashionable table spread out in all its orgnif-

9

-ence we imagine that we see
gouts, dropsies, fevers, & lethar-
gies with innumerable other
diseases lying in ambush
among the dishes, bottles & gla-
ses seeking whom they may
devour. Nor is intemperance
less destructive in other things
than in diet. How quickly does
the immoderate pursuit of
Carnal pleasure, or the abus-
ive use of intoxicating liquors
ruin the best constitution! ind-
eed these two immoralities
of ergo para-fratia. Hence we
so often see the votaries of Bac-
chus, even before they have
arrived at the prime of life worn
out with disease, and hasten-
ing with a swift pace to a

8
premature and untimely
grave. Did man reflect on
the painful disease and
premature deaths which are
constantly occurring as a
consequence of intemperance
it would we think be suf-
ficient to make him shrink
back with horror from the
indulgence even in his dar-
ling pleasures. But intemper-
ance does not stop here, it
would to God that its victims
were the only ones to suffer.
Look at the numberless or-
phans promiscuously waiving the
streets in idleness, clad in dirt
and rags, whose parents regard-
less of the future, spent in ri-
ot and debauch what might have

9

served to raise a hetty and re-
spectable offspring. Famil-
ies are not only reduced to
poverty and disgrace, but even
extirpated by intemperance.
Nothing tends so much to
prevent propagation and to
shorten the lives of children
as the intemperance of paren-
ts. The poor man who labours
all day for a lively hood, and
at night lies down content
with his humble fair can
best a numerous & healthy
offspring. while the rich man
sunk in ease & luxury often
languishes without an heir
to his ample fortunes: and if
he has one it is an object
of pity, already having

10

fatal diseases prey ing on
its vitals, and in a short
time it pines away and is
consigned over to an early
grave, as the fruits of an in-
temperate ancestry. Intem-
perance is not confined to fam-
ilies alone; but even States & em-
pires feel the influence of it
and rise or fall as it prevails.
Instead of mentioning in de-
tail the different kinds of In-
temperance and pointing
out their many bad influen-
ces on health & shall only by
way of example in the remain-
der of my discourse make a
few remarks on a particular
form of this great vice; Intemper-
ance, viz the abuse of intoxic

11
-ting liquors. Now this is what
every one has seen and many
experienced something of, and
every individual who may
chance to read my thesis can
testify to the truth of my un-
qualified assertions. I must
say and sorry I am that it
can be said that we the Med-
ical Students of the University
of Nashville are some of us guilty
of this form of contemp-
tance. How strange it is that
we would thus act consider-
ing that we profess to under-
stand something of the hum-
an economy, what it requires
to prompt it to the proper
performance of its various fun-
ctions and how excess will de-

-range every function in the
 body. Many drink day & ni-
 ght and in fact every time they
 can get any-thing, in drink
 while there are others who are
 more moderate and only take
 a little before eating (as they
 say) for the purpose of aiding
 digestion. Now with a momen-
 tary reflection we can see the
 inconsistency of their argu-
 ment. When we have a specimen
 from the animal or the veget-
 able kingdom the form & prop-
 erties of which we want to cer-
 tain the first thing thought
 of, ^{is} alcohol. Animal is anim-
 al, vegetable is vegetable, and al-
 cohol is alcohol wherever found.
 So then it follows that if alco-

13
Sol will preserve a substance when in contact within a glass jar or wooden tub, is it not reasonable that the same alcohol when in like contact with the same substance within a leathern bag or the human stomach have the same power of preservation. If this be true it is easily seen that so far from aiding digestion it rather prevents the digestive organs from performing their own function.

Moderate dram drinking leads to intoxication and every act of intoxication puts nature to the expense of a fever to throw off the poisonous draught. When this is repeated

almost every day it is easy
 to foresee the evil consequences.
 That constitution must neces-
 sarily be very strong to hold
 out under the influences of a
 daily fever. But fevers occas-
 ioned by drinking seldom go off
 in a day but often end in
 inflammation of the stomach,
 liver, or brain and produce
 fatal effects. Although the dru-
 nkness should not often fall
 by acute disease he seldom
 escapes those of a chronic form.

Liquors when used freely weak-
 en the bowels & interfere with
 digestion they destroy the
 powers of the nervous system
 generally and produce par-
 alytick convulsive disorders.

13

They also heat and derange the blood, destroy its balsamic quality, render it unfit for circulation and the nourishment of ~~the~~ the body. Hence enlarged livers with a bad portal circulation causing obstructions and dropsie as a consequence. These are some of the many ways in which topers make their exit. The habit of drinking often proceeds from misfortunes in life, some lose their property, some their friends, and others are disappointed in love, and resort to drinking as their only refuge. It affords temporary relief, but this solace is of short life and when it is over the spirits

sink as fast below their usual tone as they have been raised above it. Now a repetition of the doce becomes necessary and so on every fresh doce creating the necessity of another and larger till at length the unhappy wretch falls a victim to this poisonous drug; which not only proves destructive to the general health of an individual but also to the faculties of the mind. When the brain is highly stimulated if we suddenly withdraw the stimolent, very bad consequences follow: it is this which always causes delirium-tremens. It is strange

11
that men valuing them-
selves on account of a su-
perior degree of reason to
that of inferior animals
should fall so far below
them in the thing most reg-
uisite to hitch and repro-
duction: Viz moderation in
eating, drinking, sleeping, ex-
ercise, & peruery.

Thus much I have thought
necessary to say in regard to
Intemperance as a cause
of disease. I shall now con-
sign my production over
to older, & wiser, & better
heads, and shall wait in
anxious suspense, the just
sentance either come thou
slap or depart ye curse