

**Alcohol and the Human Brain.**

WHAT JOSEPH COOK SAYS ABOUT IT.

Cassio's language in Othello is to-day adopted by cool physiological science: "O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!"

Central in all discussion of the influence of intoxicating drink upon the human brain is the fact that albuminous substances are hardened by alcohol. I take the white of an egg, and as you see turn it out in a fluid condition into a goblet. The liquid is a viscous, glue-like substance, largely composed of albumen. It is made up of pretty near the same chemical ingredients that constitute a large part of the brain and nervous system, and of many other tissues of the body.—Forty per cent. of the matter in the corpuscles in the blood is albumen. I am about to drench this white of an egg with alcohol. I have never performed this experiment before and it may not succeed, but so certain am I that it will that I propose never to put the bottle to my lips and introduce into my system a fiend to steal away my brains.

If you will fasten your attention on the single fact that alcohol hardens this albuminous substance with which I place it in contact, you will have in this single strategetic circumstance an explanation of most of the ravages upon the blood and nerves and brain. I beg you to notice that the white of an egg in the goblet does not become hardened by exposure to the air. I have allowed it to be exposed for a time, in order that you may see there is no ledgerdemain in the experiment. I now pour alcohol upon this albuminous fluid, and if the result here is what it has been in other cases, I shall very soon be able to show you a pretty good example of what coagulated albumen is in the nervous system and blood corpuscles. You will find this white of an egg gradually so hardened that you can take it out without a fork. I notice already that a mysterious change in it has begun. A strange thickening shoots through the fluid mass. This is your moderate drunkard that I am stirring up now.

[Laughter.] There is your tippler, a piece of him [holding up a portion of the coagulated mass upon the glass pestle.] The coagulation of the substance of the brain goes on. I am stirring up a hard drinker now. The infinitely subtle laws of chemistry take their course. Here is a man, [holding up a large part of the coagulated mass] whose brains are so leathery that he is a beast and kicks his wife to death. I am stirring up in this goblet now the brain of a hardened sot. On this prongless rod, I hold up a large part of the white of an egg which you saw poured into the glass as a fluid. Here is a man, [holding up a larger mass] who has benumbed his conscience and his reason both, and has begun to be dangerous to society from a diseased brain. Wherever alcohol touches this albuminous substance, it hardens it, and it does so by absorbing and fixing the water it contains. I dip out of the goblet, now your man who has delirium tremens. Here is what was once a fluid, rolling easily to right and left, and now you have the leathery brain and the hard heart.

"Make the bed easy, Mr. B.," said old Uncle Abe to the undertaker, who was preparing the coffin for his aged wife. "Make the bed easy, for her old bones are tender and soft, and a hard bed will hurt them." He forgot for a moment that old, gray-haired man, that she was dead—that the old bones had done aching forever. Sixty-four years had she walked by his side a true and loving wife. Sixty-four years! Just think of it, in this age of divorce. Sixty-four years had they dwelt under the same sorrows of life; together mourned over the coffin of their first-born together rejoiced in the prosperity of their sons and daughters, and now she has left him alone. No wonder he forgot. Her loving hands had so long cared for him,

for he had been the feeble of the two. "Until death do us part," said the marriage service that had united them so many years ago. Death had parted them, but the love still survived. Tenderly had he cared for her all these years, and now tenderly did he watch the making of the last bed of this still loved wife. He had bravely breasted the storm of life with her by his side, but now that she was gone he could not live, and in a few days they laid him by her side.

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