

**PALMERSTON NORTH W.C.T.U.
SCIENTIFIC TEMPERANCE
COMPETITIONS.**

**PRIZE ESSAY, SENIOR DIVISION,
HIGH SCHOOL.**

**"EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON THE
BODY."**

(Essay written by Ivy Willis, Dux Girl and Gold Medallist, 1914.)

Alcohol belongs to the class of drugs known as narcotics, which are stimulating for a short time, and depressing for a longer time. Alcohol is just as much a poison as are opium, strychnine, and chloroform.

Alcohol has a great affinity for water. If substances, such as meat and vegetables, which contain water, are soaked in alcohol, they lose this water, and become tough and hard. Thus, the presence of alcohol in the stomach makes the work of digestion more difficult, and this tends to the imperfect nourishment of the body.

If we consider, in detail, the organs of the body, and how each is affected, we find, first, that the stomach is affected to a great extent, even if alcohol is taken in small quantities. The effect of alcohol on the stomach is to cause an excessive flow of digestive juice, which is of no use to a healthy individual. This juice is wasted in the absence of food to digest. Acute inflammation may result from the excessive use of alcohol.

Another very important digestive organ which becomes affected is the liver. The liver will become slow, congested, and torpid, and will not, consequently, carry out its proper functions. The liver may ultimately harden and shrivel, thus offering great resistance to the passage of blood through it.

The lungs become affected, and offer less resistance to disease germs. Thus affection of the lungs may become a very serious matter. In conjunction with the effect on the lungs, let us consider the effect of alcohol on the heart and on the circulation. The pumping powers of the heart are temporarily strengthened, but permanently weakened. The heart becomes unduly dilated, and fat tends to be deposited about the muscles of the heart, and thus the muscles become partly paralysed. The functions of the circulatory system are impaired; the waste products are not

properly removed, nor are the waste tissues repaired.

The white corpuscles in the blood help us by fighting against germs of disease. These corpuscles are so effectually damaged by the use of alcohol that they lose this function. The oxidising properties of the red corpuscles are seriously impaired by the action of alcohol.

Owing to excess of alcohol, the kidneys lose their filtering power. Various serious ailments, even to Bright's disease, are the result.

Alcohol has a very bad effect on the brain. The brain becomes so diseased that it can no longer receive impressions or form ideas. It is an appalling fact that prolonged indulgence in alcohol leads to insanity and to paralysis.

Von Moltke, the distinguished German leader, has declared that "Beer is a far more dangerous enemy to Germany than all the armies of France." Excessive use of alcohol, as it were, saps the very strength out of man; consequently, a nation whose men are constitutionally ruined by the curse of drink becomes inferior to a nation whose men are sober, stalwart, and steadfast. We should, then, strive to keep our Dominion as free from the drink evil as possible, so that we may continue to be worthy sons of grand old mother England.

**PRIZE ESSAY, JUNIOR DIVISION,
HIGH SCHOOL.**

(Essay written by Eric Horn,
age 13½ years.)

Drinks such as beer, wine, and spirits, which contain a large amount of alcohol, are not health-giving, as milk or water are. They do not help the growth of the body, but they make a person much more liable to disease. Navvies working in England who are temperance men do more work in less time than those who drink. What does this show? That drink lessens the power of endurance. Alcoholic drinks should not be taken in any shape or form, except by a doctor's express orders. Then, we may ask, if drink so confuses one's brain and lessens the power to endure hardships, why do people drink? Because drink creates an almost irresistible desire for more. It does not quench thirst, but creates it. Many a fellow has been asked by a friend to have "just one

glass," and has not had the courage to say "No." That one glass may lead to his downfall, and to his becoming a confirmed drunkard. The old proverb, "Look not on the wine when it is red in the cup, for at last it stingeth like an adder," is too true.

Persons who drink become unhealthy, and the craving for drink becomes stronger. Once a man is in the grip of drink, he might as well be in the grip of his deadliest enemy, for he will have the greatest struggle of his life to get free from its clutch. A teetotal person who receives a serious wound has much more chance of life than a heavy drinker, because drinks which contain alcohol destroy, rather than create, good blood. The money which a man spends on his glass of beer could buy him bread, containing 15oz. of heat-giving food, and 2½oz. of flesh-forming food, and he will be much healthier in consequence.

Now let us see what other evils are caused by drink. Everyone admits that more than half the crimes which are committed are due to drinking. Drink also is the very pathway to consumption, cancer, and inflammation of the lungs, the worst kind of diseases from which a person can suffer.

If drinks containing alcohol, in whatever quantity, small or great, were taken out of the world, how much we should benefit by it! But, we may perhaps ask, what will we have for stimulants? The ordinary person does not need any stimulant, and if any are wanted, fruit forms a far better one than alcohol.

Let us for a moment look into a drunkard's home. What do we see there? The terrible and degrading effect of drink on man. Broken tables, chairs, cups and saucers; dirty rags are worn for clothing by the children, and beer stains are on everything! Children and mothers are crying out for bread to a drunken father, who spends all his money in the public-house! Yet when polling day comes, people go and vote for Continuance of this business, and believe themselves right in doing so! When the Territorials were in town a while ago, 40 of them were arrested for drunkenness, and yet people say that this trade does no harm! Let them use their eyes, and they will see examples of its harmfulness all around them.