

ABSENTHIE.

It appears that until 1864 the belief that there was something injurious in absinthie, except the alcohol, was general enough. In that year, however, a mad doctor, named Marce, communicated a paper to the Academy of Sciences, in which he demonstrated that the essence of wormwood was contained in the liquor called absinthie, in the proportion of twenty grammes of essence to 100 litres of alcohol, and argued that this essence had a peculiarly injurious effect on the brain. In 1867 a petition was presented to the Senate, praying that the sale of absinthie might be absolutely forbidden. Nothing came of it; and now the "question of absinthie" has been once more brought forward by two physicians, M. Magnan and Bonchereau, who, for the first time, have made regular scientific experiments with the questionable stuff. The object of the experimentalists was to show what the effect of pure alcohol would be on a guinea-pig, and what the effect of absinthie. With this view, they placed a guinea-pig under a glass case, with a saucer full of essence of wormwood by his side, another guinea-pig being placed under another glass case with a saucer full of alcohol. The guinea-pig who had to say, "being treated" with absinthie, died at the fumes, and for a few moments seemed, like the ordinary absinthie drinker, "supremely happy." Gradually, however, he became heavy and dull, and at last fell on his side, agitating his limbs convulsively, foaming at the mouth, and presenting all the signs of epilepsy. The same epileptic symptoms were manifested on the part of a cat and rabbit, who, in a similar manner, were made to inhale the fumes of absinthie.

THE sad fate of Dr. Epstein, the Paris conjuror, who was wounded by a splinter of a ramrod discharged from his own conjuring pistol, illustrates, says the London *Orchestra*, what Robert Houdin had insisted upon in his book—that magicians possess no ordinary bravery to stand before the muzzle of a pistol, knowing how such a mischance may bring them face to face with death. Houdin himself used to play with danger with an entirely needless assurance. He relates how once he had performed some startling fire-arm tricks before a party of Arabians, making use, of course, of the ordinary form of conjuring pistol, which is so contrived that the ramrod draws the bullet. While the rest of the party were expressing their admiration, a crafty old Marabout, who had some suspicion of the true nature of the trick, said:

"The stranger is doubtless a strong magician; will he suffer me to fire at him with my own pistol?"

"Yes," said Houdin, unhesitatingly; "but first I must make invocation to those who assist me."

The next day he met the same party, and offered a saucerful of bullets to the inspection of the Marabout. Satisfied that they were lead—as indeed they were—the Arab handed his pistols to Houdin, who loaded them, using the Arab's ramrod. His own friends were in terror, and even his wife, well as she knew his skill, was in perplexity when she saw him hand back to the Arab one of the loaded pistols.

"Now fire," he said.

The Arab did so, and Houdin was seen with the bullet between his teeth.

"Bah!" he said, seizing the other pistol; "you cannot use your own weapons. See here. You have been unable to draw blood from my flesh, and I will draw blood from your wall."

He aimed at the wall, fired, and immediately a stain of blood was seen. The Marabout went up to the wall, and when he had dipped his finger in the blood, which was trickling down, his awe and amazement were so great that his features assumed a ghastly hue. Yet the trick was simple enough, two prepared bullets having been skillfully substituted by Houdin for the leaden bullets he took from the saucer. But the experiment was quite new, and Houdin tells us that he trembled, and could scarcely control his terror as he saw the Marabout drawing the trigger from the pistol.

A PHYSICIAN'S EVIDENCE ON DANCING.

That beautiful, graceful accomplishment of dandling, or perverted late hours, has outraged many sensible people, and led them to deprive the young ones of this most simple and healthful enjoyment, because it has been abused. For myself, I can testify not only to its healthful, but recuperative power. The fortieth, nay, the fiftieth year of my age found me enjoying this life-cheering exercise. It should be one of the earliest amusements of children, and care should be taken by parents that it is understood as an amusement. While I am on this topic, I mention a case that occurred in my practice. A thoughtful, anxious mother, who had lost three children, brought to me her only remaining child, a daughter. Her temperament nervous-bilious—the nervous fearfully predominant—with great irritability of the system; peevish, passionate, dyspeptic, sleepless; of course exacting, arbitrary, and uncomfortable, the poor child looked sad, old, morbid, and miserable. She had been to school, because her parents thought it an amusement for her to be with other children. After critically examining her physiognomy, I said to her mother, "What is the temperament of your husband?" "The same as my own," she replied. "Then the child is doubly stunted," I continued. "Very vigorous measures must be used, if you expect to restore her to health. Divorce her immediately from anything mental, so far as memorizing is concerned; then send her to dancing school, that she may combine exercise with order and melody, and thus some of her rough edges may be rounded." The child, her large eyes open with wonder and delight, interrupted with "Dancing school? Oh, how I've longed to go! But mother says it's wrong, and leads to wickedness. What a dilemma for a physician! What a dilemma for a child! Did you ever intend your daughter to play the piano, guitar, or other musical instrument?" said I, to the mother. "Oh, yes," was the answer. "Why," I continued, "why show such partiality to the upper extremities. The hands are rendered happy as a medium of melody; the feet are rendered equally happy in the same way."

A nice afternoon school revived the

little girl, who grew in health and harmony every month, as she followed the hygienic rules prescribed for her. Dancing is a healthful, beautiful, graceful recreation, and is not responsible for the abuse luxury has thrown around it. The vulgarism and excitement of the ball room have no more to do with the simple enjoyment of the dance than the rich wines and sumptuous banquets of the gourmand, in whom they induce disease, having to do with the temperate repasts that satisfy the natural wants of the body.—Dr. H. K. Hunt.

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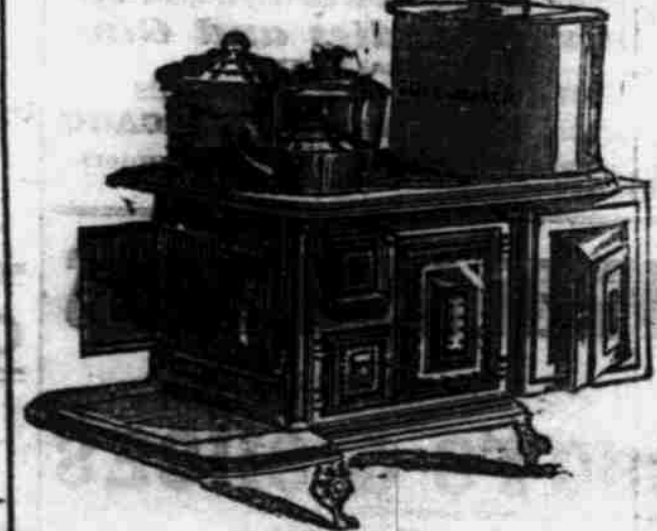
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