

which we have alluded are wonderfully similar, and, indeed, in the case of the poisoning by bromidia at the Marylebone Infirmary, the circumstances were almost identical with those shown in that at Guy's Hospital. So long as human nature is what it is, accidents from carelessness will happen; but if Nursing is to take any rank whatever amongst professions which are trustworthy and useful to the public, deaths from sheer unqualified ignorance—which are, therefore, inexcusable—must be prevented. In each of these cases of over-dose, the doctor had written the prescription in symbol, and the nurse had mistaken that which stands for a drachm for that which stands for one ounce. This might be condoned considering the extreme illegibility of some persons' writing. But the Nurse ought to have known that in giving an ounce either of chloral or of bromidia she was giving a poisonous dose; and it is evident that in these and other cases, the Nurse was not even aware that the drug that she was administering was a poison at all.

Such "deaths from misadventure," as one Coroner's jury described them, are really deaths from ignorance, and the sooner that fact is realised, and the necessary steps to remove that ignorance are taken, the better will it be for the Nursing profession and the safer will it be for the public. With life and death in our hands there is no excuse for soft speeches; we must face the hard facts however disagreeable they may be to our self-esteem or to our professional confidence.

Such accidents should never happen, and it is clearly the duty of Hospital Matrons to see that their occurrence is rendered impossible. Nurses should be taught in future the names and doses of poisonous drugs, and the symptoms of an overdose of each, so that they can immediately obtain skilled assistance if such symptoms appear. It would not cause much trouble to the teacher, nor be very difficult for the taught, to impart and to receive this small modicum of instruction; but it would, probably, be the means of saving many human lives.

In the next place, we would suggest that all poisons should be dispensed into special bottles; that all stock medicines should be made up with water to a uniform dose; and that on every poison bottle should be pasted a printed label containing the name and usual dose of the drug which it contains. Then Nurses should, as a matter of invariable routine, never give a dose of any medicine without first reading the label on the bottle, and, furthermore, satisfying themselves that the contents are not widely different from those designated by the label, as, for example, carbolic acid is from olive oil.

Then, and finally, we consider that medical men would act wisely if, in giving directions to Nurses,

they specified the doses they desire to be administered, in words and not by symbols; every such direction being invariably given in writing.

#### A RED NOSE.

This is a misfortune rather than a fault with which no inconsiderable portion of the population is undoubtedly afflicted. According to a German physiologist the tell-tale tint, which is supposed to be largely due to the immoderate use of alcoholic stimulants, is caused by the contraction of the minute arteries of the organ and subsequent stasis of blood in the veinlets. The author has therefore employed a new method of treatment for this condition, and, apparently, with considerable success. He passes a continuous current of electricity through the nose for a few minutes at a time every two or three days, and he states that after ten or fifteen applications the violet-red colour completely disappears, because the muscular walls of the veins and capillaries are by this means stimulated to increased activity, and so passive congestion is prevented and cured. This is a more scientific method, and consequently one more in accordance with the spirit of the age, than a remedy pursued in the United States, where apparently red noses are dreaded and avoided with a holy horror. On the principle apparently that "like cures like," we learn, on good authority, that it is the custom of our American cousins to use alcohol for the cure, just as it is undoubtedly the cause, of this condition in many instances. One advantage of this remedy is that it can be employed without fear, even in States which are violently addicted to "total prohibition," because the fluid is not applied internally, but is used solely as an external application to the rubicund organ.

#### WRITING ON GLASS.

A discovery has recently been made which may prove to be of the greatest importance in various ways, and especially in artistic decoration. It has been found that aluminium possesses the remarkable quality, when used in the form of a pencil, of making upon glass, or any similar substance, metallic tracings which cannot be readily effaced. This effect is facilitated by moistening the glass, and it is essential that the surface should be perfectly clean, inasmuch as the faintest trace of grease is found to prevent the adhesion of the metal to the glass. Experiments have been made to determine whether any other of the metals possess this property. Magnesium is found to have much the same effect, but it is so readily oxidised as to give no permanent results. Zinc and Cadmium, which in a less degree possess it, both require a perfectly dry surface, and neither of them give quite such clear effects as the aluminium.

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