

scriptions for several years, assured me that nearly 2,000 out of 16,000 prescriptions he had counted called for opium.

But that is not all. When the patent medicines that go to make up three-fourths of the merchantable stock of the chemist are gone over we run across more opium. With few exceptions, the patented cough balsams all contain opium. That is why they are so dear. The more expensive the preparation the larger the amount of opium it contains. It almost seems as if there were a cloak under which the unrestricted sale of opium is carried on in open violation of the law.

The figures given here were rather difficult to obtain, but anybody can verify them. It would pay legislators to ponder over them now that they have given us laws to regulate the practice of medicine and surgery in this State.

Many persons carry a doctor's prescription calling for half an ounce or more of opium in their pockets for years, and have it replenished as often as they like. When the paper becomes old and faded they have it copied by an obliging druggist's assistant, and it lasts for another year or so of daily use. They are the persons who sooner or later go to fill up our insane asylums and private retreats. If they are poor they become burdens upon the community. If they have influential friends they find a home in some retired retreat where the hope is kept green that they have not passed beyond human aid.

By this time they are physical and moral wrecks, for nothing like opium will undermine a noble character and a strong will.

All this is the pernicious side of opium. Now what can be said of it?

A great deal.

It is beyond question a valuable drug, and no doctor can afford to be without it for a moment. To relieve excruciating pain, which of itself may kill a person, it has no equal as a sedative, a sleep producer and a tonic. If wakeful nights have sapped a sufferer's vital force until there is little left, nothing like opium will bring on rest and freedom from pain. There are many kindred conditions in which the use of opium is indicated, yes, demanded, but rarely has it any other value in the therapy for the cure of disease. It is seldom more than a remedy of expediency. As a rule it disguises the very symptoms that enable a thoughtful, competent doctor to strike at the root of the evil as he should, and it is precisely for this reason that its apparent haphazard use is so much to be condemned in medical practice.

HOW TO ADMINISTER OPIUM.

Perhaps it is because a patient in pain always feels better after a dose of opium that the doctor

who is weak in diagnosis, physiology and pathology, but strong in therapy, requires such a large amount of it in treating the diseases human flesh is heir to. Countless thousands of opium habitués can trace their addiction to the drug to doctors.

I know dozens of physicians who, like myself, make it a rule never to let a patient know when opium is given, and who mark their prescriptions with a cabalistic sign which says to the apothecary 'Not to be duplicated except upon instructions.'

As long as the apothecary has a soul above money the possible evil is kept under control. The only justification for the unrestricted dosage of opium that medical science can sanction is where a person is afflicted with a painful incurable disease which has resisted all known forms of treatment. Then opium serves a useful purpose in easing suffering. To quickly educate such persons to become opium eaters is only humane."

Reflections

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



A VERY interesting pamphlet written by Mr. F. Mitchell, the Honorary Secretary of the Gravesend Hospital, has recently been issued. It is illustrated by excellent sketches, and gives an admirable history of the work accomplished by the Gravesend Hospital.

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In the course of the pamphlet Mr. Mitchell says:—"It occurred to me when recently enjoying the hospitality of the Mayor and hearing the Army, Navy and Reserve Forces toasted with their full meed of praise, that there was a large army who were scarcely ever toasted. I refer to the Honorary Medical Staff of our Hospitals, and particularly our local institution; 338 in-patients, 4,921 out-patients in one year, with the prospect of harder work for the future. What is the enemy they have to fight? The arch enemy of sickness and disease, and right nobly do they do it. I suppose if you were to ask one of the members of our medical staff about the patients, he would say a number of the out-patient cases are to them uninteresting. Well, to me a bilious attack with the consequent blue pill and black draft, is sufficiently interesting: but if out of the uninteresting cases they can get one that requires all the tactics they can pursue, then it is war with the enemy, and no

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