

the selecting committee at St. Bartholomew's will be faced by any such difficulty. There are a number of ladies who have been trained in the hospital, and who have subsequently held positions of authority in it, who have since earned for themselves the most honourable records as Matrons of important hospitals, and who would be well qualified to continue, as Matron and Superintendent of Nursing of their Alma Mater, the sound practical teaching which has enabled them to make excellent reputations elsewhere.

### Medical Matters.

#### HOPE FOR THE VICTIMS OF NARCOTICS.

Dr. Alexander Lambert, Visiting Physician to Bellevue Hospital, New York, and Professor of Clinical Medicine at Cornell University, contributes to *Nash's Magazine* for March an interesting article on the above subject, in which he says, in part:—

From time immemorial mankind has sought substances to help celebrate his joys, or soothe his sorrows, or blunt the drudgery of his existence. Opium and alcohol have most frequently been used for these purposes. Of late years cocaine has been added to this list. Whenever these narcotics have been employed for these purposes they have often been used to excess.

When the habit of the excessive use of narcotics has once been formed, so rare indeed have been the instances of individuals successfully freeing themselves from their enslaving habit that they have been regarded as medical curiosities. In the whole broad range of the practice of medicine there is no situation more trying to patient and physician than the struggle to obliterate the craving for narcotics and to re-establish the patient in a normal mental state in which he may again face successfully the problems of existence.

Until recently this seemed all but impossible, but lately a treatment was discovered which successfully obliterated the craving for narcotics, and persons who were formerly enslaved may now have the opportunity to begin life anew without their resistless desire for narcotic indulgence.

The treatment of those addicted to narcotics has heretofore been a more or less rapid withdrawal and then a deprivation of the drug, trusting to the deprivation to cause gradually a cessation of the craving for the narcotic. But deprivation is not an obliteration of the craving.

This craving is both physical and mental, and the failure of the deprivation method has been due to the continuance of the craving in spite of the deprivation from the narcotic. Great injustice has often been done to many narcotic addicts who willingly have submitted to all the suffering of deprivation in vain hopes of relief from the irresistible craving, because after their supposed cure they have been unable to resist the ever-present desire and have relapsed. They have usually been held as morally responsible for the impelling force of their still poisoned minds and bodies. With equal justice should we consider the chronic dyspeptic a moral degenerate because of his peevish morbidness. The method of treatment should be blamed, not the unfortunate patients.

#### THE NEW TREATMENT OBLITERATES THE CRAVING.

This treatment begins at the other end and obliterates the craving for narcotics. The treatment consists of the administration of a mixture of belladonna, xanthoxylum (prickly ash), and hyoscyamus, with a proper amount of active catharsis to stimulate the action of the liver and produce rapid and thorough elimination of the narcotic. There is not a sudden withdrawal of the narcotic, but enough of the narcotic is given at certain stated intervals to prevent the appearance of the uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms.

The patients do not suffer beyond a bearable discomfort, and the obliteration of the craving is not a matter of weeks and months, but is accomplished in less than five days. This result is often so dramatic that one hesitates to believe it possible. It seems too good to be true.

This method of treatment was perfected and used for a number of years by Mr. Charles B. Towns, of New York, who gave it to me to use and convince myself of its effectiveness, and then publish it to the medical profession. I have used it in the wards of Bellevue Hospital, New York, and published it as soon as my experience with it justified me. The exact physiologic action of the belladonna mixture is not clear, but that it does obliterate the craving for morphine, cocaine, and alcohol is beyond question.

#### THE NATURE OF THE TREATMENT.

The method of treatment here spoken of is new, not because it brings into use some recently discovered drug, but it is new in making use of a heretofore unused combination of well-known drugs and using them in an entirely new way. Even after its details are known, it cannot be successfully administered in a perfunc-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)