

spite of recent attempts to control the evil. This habit ultimately renders the addict a nervous wreck, weak in character, with little moral sense and poor in physique.

The craving for the drug is most commonly produced in the West by its prolonged administration during a painful illness. It is therefore most important that it should only be used for limited periods in acute cases. Only in conditions such as inoperable carcinoma, which are likely to prove rapidly fatal, is its use justifiable in chronic disease.

"The treatment of drug addiction is extremely difficult. The patient must be confined to a special institution, where attempts are made to substitute the offending drug with others in gradually decreasing doses until both have been entirely withdrawn." . . . On this subject the author alludes to "cannabis (Indian hemp or cannabis indica). This is the basis of hashish, the smoking of which is one of the forms of drug addiction. It is rarely used for therapeutic purposes. The following is a description of its action (cushny) which is included here as an illustration of the effects of certain substances of this type on the drug addict." Soon after its administration the patient passes into a dreamy, semi-conscious state, in which the judgment seems to be lost, while the imagination is untrammelled by its usual restraints.

The dreams assume the vividness of visions, are of boundless extravagance, and, of course, vary with the character and pursuit of the individual. In the eastern races they seem generally to partake of an amorous nature. The "true believer" sees the gardens of paradise and finds himself surrounded by troops of hours of unspeakable beauty, while the less imaginative European finds himself unaccountably happy and feels constrained to active movement often of a purposeless and even absurd character. Ideas flash through the mind without apparent continuity, and all measurement of time and space is lost.

When it is remembered how greatly alcohol was once considered of use as a stimulant—it is interesting to read—"The use of alcohol as a therapeutic measure has been steadily decreasing in medical practice, and although some physicians use it freely, others exclude it entirely. The true position is that it probably has a limited sphere of usefulness. . . . Alcohol is frequently called a stimulant (and ordered in a 'stimulant book'). This description is incorrect. The apparent stimulating action is actually the result of its depressing effect on the higher centres of the brain, whereby normal mental control and anxiety are removed to greater or less degree. Alcohol is not a cardiac stimulant, nor does it increase the activity of the respiratory centre. . . ."

"It is not always wise to cut off completely its supply from a patient suffering from an acute disease who is accustomed to its use. On the other hand, there are few conditions in the young adult in which it is of any value."

In referring to Penicillin the author explains that this substance is the active principle of a mould (*Penicillium notatum*) which has a marked action on many bacteria. It may be given by intramuscular injection (3 to 4 hourly) or intravenously, and may also be applied locally to septic areas. He refers to the chief organisms susceptible to penicillin; when penicillin is indicated, when penicillin is of value; when it is of doubtful value or of no value, and its administration.

Space does not permit of how much could be written of the value of this work, but it can be said that the nurse who masters the instruction and guidance to be found in this splendid little volume (at modest cost—the second edition of "Materia Medica for Nurses"—and keeps it by her for reference), need not be dismayed by the grave responsibility which, in her sphere of duty, the administration of drugs and the knowledge pertaining thereto devolves upon her.—A. S. B.

FIGHTING FUND FOR FREEDOM

What do you know about the aims and objects of "The Fighting Fund for Freedom?"

To this question we fear the majority of nurses will reply "Nothing."

We invite those of our responsible profession who realise their duty to the community to obtain all necessary information concerning it from the Hon. Secretary, 1, Dover Street, London, W.1.

The basic aim of the fund is: (1) to uphold the right of the individual to personal freedom and subject to his duty to the State to freedom, to live and conduct his own affairs in his own way free from official control, and to employ all means to inculcate into the mind of the voter the sacred duty which devolves upon him or her never to neglect to exercise that vote and thereby to fulfil the grave responsibility which is rightly imposed upon every individual possessing that right. To petition Parliament or any local authority and to originate and promote improvements in the law.

Had Registered Nurses in 1943 been alive to their own, and the interests of the public, the Nurses Act, promoted by the then Minister of Health, Mr. Ernest Brown and Mr. E. Bevin, Minister of Labour (now Foreign Minister) would never have been rushed through Parliament, and the profession of Nursing hurled into the abyss like the gederme swine.

The sick demand that we arise and crawl uphill from the slough of despond into which we have slithered.

WHAT TO READ.

MEMOIRS AND BIOGRAPHY.

"Princess Elizabeth." Dermot Morrah, assisted by Betty Spencer Shew (by Royal Permission, and under the auspices of King George's Jubilee Trust).

"Bevin Boy." Derek Agnew.

FICTION.

"Unless Two be Agreed." Margaret Pedler.

"The Hopeful Heart." Sir Philip Gibbs.

"Proud Citadel." Dorothy Evelyn Smith.

"Pillar of Fire." George Borodin.

"Molly Lee." Elisabeth Kyle.

"Hath the Rain a Father?" Frances Bellerby.

"Flint." Charles G. Norris.

"To a Dark Lady." Constance King.

"Two names upon the Shore." Susan Ertz.

MISCELLANEOUS.

"Women in Uniform." Edited by D. Collett Wadge.

"The Lost Treasures of London." William Kent.

"The Sin of our Age." D. R. Davies.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Miss A. C. Bell writes:—Please find enclosed my yearly subscription of 7s. to THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

I do hope it will continue to flourish. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick will be sadly missed by all who valued her leadership to our profession which seems to be groping in the dark at present.

M.E.S. writes:— . . . THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is so interesting, and the late Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was such a champion for the nurses' rights. I have always been a great admirer of hers, and many a strong argument I have had from colleagues over her merits. I once went to a conference, 1916; I had no right to be there, but I was allowed in and went because Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was speaking, and I did enjoy it. It was on Registration!

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