In many, if not all, public and private asylums, there can be found men and women who are insane in no sense except one habit, and who are treated as insane, yet no one seems to object to it, and the law winks at it. This fact alone shows the drift of unconscious public sentiment, and shows that society does regard such persons as practically insane.

It would perhaps astonish the criminal lawyers to know that a large part, perhaps a third, of the inmates of our asylums for insane, know right from wrong as clearly on most subjects as the best of us; but the trouble is to keep from doing the wrong.

Why should not the man with an ungovernable habit, which will lead him and all that are dear to him to sure destruction, be regarded as powerless to act for himself, just as the suicidal maniacs? Have his children or his friends no rights? Has his wife no legal or moral status? Shall he go on procreating unfortunates like himself, to in time, perhaps, fill poor-houses, jails and asylums?

The strong arm of a benign and merciful law should stop him, should declare him unsound, and place him in confinement, before he has destroyed his property and himself.

CURIOSITIES OF HOMŒOPATHIC PHARMACY.

Read before the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, April 23, 1890.

BY ROBERT REYBURN, M.D.,

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Having recently obtained a copy of the circular and price list, issued by a dealer in higher potencies residing in New York City, I desire to impart to the members of this Society and the profession, some of the information therein contained. This document is a printed pamphlet of thirty-two pages, and is entitled "Catalogue of Morbific Products, Nosodes, and other Remedies in High Potencies." These remedies are for sale at No. 13 W. 38th St., New York City. By Samuel Swan, M.D.

Glancing over the catalogue, on page 16, we were struck by one article of the materia medica, kept for sale and called "luna, or moonlight." How in the world is this obtained, and what are its properties? Astronomers have long disputed as to whether the rays of the moon possessed any heating power, but why need they any longer be in doubt, when they may be bought by the vial full, and seen and tasted by ordinary mortals?

On page 20, we find three species of *pediculi* (or lice) on the list of remedies to be dispensed, namely: *pediculis pubis*, *pediculis capitis* and *pediculis corporis*. These minute animals we only expect to find on uncleanly persons, and the idea of

swallowing them, or a preparation made from them, no matter how dilute, is rather startling to the uninitiated. The *pediculis corporis*, by-the-way, has a note in brackets after it, stating that this special lot came from Boston. The inquiry then arises in our minds, Why is this? Are the Boston *pediculis* more voracious, or of larger size than those of other cities? What is the cause of their superiority? Unfortunately, the vendor of these delectable preparations does not condescend to inform us upon these points, so we are compelled to remain in ignorance.

On page 1 we find on the list the name "*acarus scabies*" translated "lice insect." As the *acarus* mentioned is the one found in the disease known as the itch (in common parlance), and is not the *pediculis*, there seems to be a (H) itch in the Latin; but trifles like this need never daunt the swallower of preparations like these.

But, thank Heaven, there is on the first page one familiar remedy, viz.: "*adepts anserina*" (goose grease). How well do we remember the vile odor of this substance when applied externally to the neck in our youthful days. To paraphrase Hamlet, "The offense was rank and smelt to Heaven." Never did we imagine we should see it prepared in "High Potencies" and given in granules.

On page 15, "*lachryma filia*" are defined as "Tears from a young girl in great grief and suffering." In ancient Rome small crystal or glass flasks have been found called "*lachrymalia*," which are said to have contained the tears of the mourners. Were these "*lachryma filia*" obtained from such sources, or are they the tears of some modern damsel, mourning, perhaps, like Miss Flora McFlimsey, because she had nothing to wear, or in utter desperation from the lack of a spring bonnet, or it may be crossed in hopeless love?

The explanation of "*flavus irides*" on page 11, is "yellow ray of the spectrum." Here is bottled sunshine with a vengeance! Photographers have long desired to fix the fleeting rays of the sun, and make their pictures glow with the colors of nature, and here we have them prepared and fit for internal medication. Would that we knew the secret of this preparation! One thing is certain, if we *must* swallow globules, it would be much pleasanter to think of swallowing bottled sunshine, than a preparation of *pediculis corporis*, even though they were labelled as coming from the city of Boston.

On page 6 we find, "*carbunculus* on neck of swan very severe." We are not told whether the carbuncle was very severe upon the swan, or whether the pus obtained from it has been very severe upon the unlucky patient who takes it—perhaps both statements may be true.

"*Fel gryllus Americana*" (page 11), or "Brazilian cricket," is said to be beneficial for "sup-

pression of urine with or without pain," and this important fact is also stated, that "a boy who had chills and fever swallowed a live cricket and never had a chill afterwards."

On the first page several dainties are provided for lovers of preparations of the high potencies. One is "*adenia*," or "glands from a person suffering with Hodgkin's disease;" a little further on is the "*Ailanthus* bug," an insect found on the odorous though unfragrant *Ailanthus* tree. On the same page "*Albumenurea*" is defined as "renal albumen," or in other words, the putrid and disgusting products of the decomposition of the human body, as found in diseased urine.

On page 2, "*anthracin*" is said to be "pus from a carbuncle." On page 4 are two delightful compounds: one is from the *Blatta Americana* or "American cockroach," and the second is a more distinguished member of the same family, namely: "*Blatta Orientalis*" or "East Indian cockroach." Farther down the same page is "*Buboin Syphilitica*" or "pus from syphilitic buboes." On page 5 are a number of preparations of *calcareia* from different parts of the body, as "*calcareia renalis*," or "stone of the kidney," and "*calcareia*" from the lungs and bladder. On page 6 we have three preparations made from the different varieties of catarrh to choose from, viz.: catarrh of the intestines, catarrh of the bladder, and catarrh of the nose. In this case you certainly "pays your money and takes your choice."

Page 7 gives us a little ray of hope that we may not be called upon to swallow any more such vile compounds, for there we find "*cerulia irides*" defined as "blue ray of the spectrum," but as if to dash our newly found hopes to the ground, immediately beneath is given a preparation made from the "chancre of syphilis."

Page 8 gives a remedy for constipation in newly born infants, viz.: colostrum, found in their intestines previous to and after birth. Page 9 gives preparations of two varieties of poisonous snakes, viz.: *crotalus horridus* (rattlesnake) and *crotalus cascavella*. On the same page is "*crusta lactea*," commonly called "milk crust," and found on the heads of sickly or uncleanly babies. Farther down on the same page are preparations of diabetes mellitus, and also of the serum found in cases of dropsy.

Pages 10 and 11 give preparations entitled "*electricitas*" or electricity, and "*galvanismus*" or galvanism. It has been said of our countryman, Franklin, that he brought down the lightning from Heaven for the service of man, but our homoeopathic brethren can do more than that, they can make it edible and drinkable for ordinary mortals.

But time fails me, and I can only enumerate a few of the choice morsels obtainable in the high potencies: "*hippозinine*," a preparation from the glands; "*lyssin*" from hydrophobic patients;

"*osteo necrosis*" from necrosed or dead bone; pus from abscess of rectum, and caries of heel, pus from septic abscess.

Page 22 gives us "*rubrum irides*," or red ray of the spectrum, and thus completing the list of rays of light, used in the manufacture of their globules. On page 23 we find four varieties of cancer served up to us, viz.: of the breast, uterus, bowel and face.

Page 25 seems to show that Dr. Brown-Séguard's so-called elixir has been anticipated, for we there find two preparations, one "*testiculo galinae*," or testicle of the fowl, and "*testiculo muliebris sinistra*," from the left ovary of a woman.

Many other preparations might be given, but I will conclude by giving an extract from the note after page 30. Dr. Swan says that the plan of sending grafts has been adopted, viz.: "If a graft is put into a vial filled with unmedicated pellets, and corked, the whole mass will be medicated in half an hour." Farther down on the same page he says: "When a vial of medicine is nearly emptied, fill it with unmedicated pellets and you will not have to purchase the remedy a second time."

THE CLINIC.

A CLINICAL LECTURE.

Delivered at St. Luke's Hospital, March 26, 1890.

BY HENRY T. BYFORD, M.D.,
OF CHICAGO.

Gentlemen:—As this is the last time I shall meet you here, I shall naturally have more to say and less to do than usual. The amount of practical work to be done during the season, and the limited number of clinic hours at my disposal, twelve in number, allow of little time for talk.

ABSCESS DISCHARGING INTO PERITONEAL CAVITY.

The case now upon the table is exceedingly interesting, for the patient may be said to bear a charmed life. No cat, thrown from a shot tower, ever landed on its feet more triumphantly than does this woman after passing through the extremest perils of the knife. She has been twice within the shadow of the valley of death, yet a high temperature never came to her, nor has a good appetite ever gone from her.

Three months ago my colleague drained a peritoneal cyst situated in the lower abdomen. The cyst wall promptly sloughed off and gave rise to the most foul-smelling, septic and troublesome discharge imaginable. The abscess walls were made up of intestines matted together and had not, after three months, ceased pouring out large quantities of pus. But for the patient's prodigious digestive powers, she would undoubtedly