

frequently occupying the same room with the family or families."

NOT "ROBBED OF SIGHT BY A DOCTOR."—On November 1 the *Chicago Tribune*, and other papers we presume, printed a sensational telegram from Philadelphia which was such a slander on the medical profession that we asked our correspondent in that city to investigate. One paper had big "scare heads" beginning "Robbed of Sight by a Doctor;" another, "Eyesight Destroyed by a Doctor," etc. The item stated that J. H. Askin, who at one time was a financial power in Philadelphia, was now blind and an inmate of the Masonic Home on North Broad Street. According to his story, as told by the newspapers, his eyes were troubling him and his family physician was treating them unsuccessfully, when he called in the aid of another physician. Under the latter's care he at first improved, when occurred an unaccountable change for the worse and the sight was finally lost. Years after he had lost his sight, he says, the physician last chosen came to him and cleared away the mystery. On his death-bed, his old family physician had confessed that he had, by tampering with his medicine, caused his set-back and final result. He did it because he was jealous of the other's success. Our correspondent writes us that he made an investigation into the case and found that there was an aged man by the name of J. H. Askin living at the Masonic Home. On inquiry at the institution, the matron stated that no one believed that story because it is the opinion that his mind is affected. It was further learned that the reporter who wrote the sensational article called while the matron was not in the building, and she knew nothing of the matter until reading the article in the newspaper. If all such were utilized for reportorial purposes, there are, perhaps, few who would escape libel.

Correspondence.

"Morphinism Among Physicians."

HARTFORD, CONN., Nov. 11, 1899.

To the Editor: A paper read recently before the New York State Medical Association on "Morphinism Among Physicians" (see JOURNAL, November 4, pp. 1165 and 1173), has created unusual interest, and brought me a very large correspondence relating to it. A number of critics have asserted, with hysterical dogmatism, that the statement that from 6 to 10 per cent. of all physicians used drugs and opium was gross exaggeration and untrue. An equal number of persons are confident that this is a minimum estimate, especially in certain sections of the country. In other localities it may seem unsupported by observation. In an eastern city of over five hundred physicians, over 20 per cent. used spirits and opium to excess, and yet a prominent physician in a newspaper interview asserted that not 2 per cent. were spirit or drug takers. While the study of 3244 physicians from which these conclusions were drawn may not be sufficient for positive data, yet these conclusions are supported by the experience and opinions of men who are in a position to know something of the prevalence of morphinism and other drug taking. A great many physicians have a limited personal acquaintance with the profession at large, and are not in a position to know very clearly the habits of their neighbors. The drug-taker is always secretive, and often his intimate friends are ignorant of his addiction, and only when chronic stages are reached is it suspected. While it is a sad fact that any number of educated physicians should suffer from drug disease, it is stupid to deny and assert that conclusions from the study of a certain number of cases are exaggerations. It is possible that in certain localities the figures may not be confirmed, and it is always possible that a variable per cent. of drug-taking physi-

cians are concealed in every community. At all events, whatever the actual per cent. may be, the topic is an especially personal one to each physician. Here, as elsewhere, knowledge of the danger may aid in prevention, and realization of its presence will stimulate to greater efforts for escape. My remark in the paper read, "that there was no specific cure," has been turned to say that "there is no cure." This is an error. There are constantly a large number of physicians in the various asylums and homes of the country who are treated successfully for this drug-addiction. Morphinism is a disease, and is curable, but only along lines of rational, scientific medicine. Morphinism among physicians is a peril that can not be treated lightly, and can not be disguised or put aside by denials. We should recognize these unfortunates and turn all our energies to save them before they become incurable and lost forever.

Yours very truly,

T. D. CROTHERS, M.D.

Foreigner's Status in Japan.*

NEW YORK CITY, Nov. 11, 1899.

To the Editor: This is what a foreign physician must expect to find in Japan. The Japanese themselves, in 1879, dismissed all their foreign tutors, feeling perfectly assured in their Asiatic stupidity, that they knew everything worth knowing in the medical lore of "degenerate Europe" and America, and will never recur to the services of foreigners. The only chance for a foreign physician to practice his profession in Japan would be in "foreign ports," Yokohama, for instance, where there are some 3000 foreigners, including their families, mostly English. There are more English—Americans and British—than Germans, everywhere in Japan. The medical field of Yokohama has been most ably filled by Americans for many years, by Dr. Eldridge, who is there now, and before him, for twenty odd years, by the lamented Dr. Simmons. You see that the only chance for foreigners in Japan would be in some other foreign settlement. My practice was in Tokio, where many Americans were employed by the Japanese Government; General Williams of Indiana, the chief adviser of the Treasury Department; General Le Gendre, formerly U. S. Consul at Amoy, chief adviser to the State Department; Dr. Hepburn of California, of dictionary fame; Dr. Antisell, Dr. Rice, Dr. Whitney, etc. In fact, Americans had nearly all the "plum trees shaken" for them in those days. Germany had only the University medical chairs. Most of the pioneer work of opening up medical Japan to Westerners was done by Americans: Dr. Wallace Taylor, Dr. Schmidt, and a host of others, too modest even to seize the ear of a globe-trotter.

From the American Commodore Perry's time, 1854, down to 1879, there have been more American doctors in the foreign service of Japan than Germans. The foreign medical element there to-day is a very small element. There are, of course, some missionary doctors in the various cities, Tokio, Nagasaki, Kioto, Kobe, etc. These are poorly paid by their churches and expect a revenue from the foreign lay element. As I have said, such a revenue can only be a small one.

While I was in Japan it was French officers, and not German, who drilled, and had always drilled, the Japanese soldiers. Before the French officers' time there were no Japanese soldiers. Since the war with China the self-reliance of the Japanese and their feeling of independence of the foreigner, mixed with a congenital contempt and dislike for the foreigner, has increased. If the Japanese had been permitted by Russia, France and Germany to get all they wanted from China the foreigner would have been nowhere. Through the interference of the foreigner they were foiled in a considerable measure, therefore so much worse is it for the foreigner residing in Japan. What makes the situation much worse is that the Governments of the United States, England and Germany have in a fit of ignorant stupidity delivered over their citizens to the mercy of Japanese laws.

I have said enough to put your reader in a condition to judge himself whether it will be for his own advantage ever to go to Japan.

It is said that there has been a great improvement in Japan

*See "Medicine in the Far East," JOURNAL, November 11, p. 1238.

"since I left it;" that is, since all foreigners left it. I am glad to hear that Japan has improved so much. I hope even that the streets are asphalted, or even paved, and that underground drainage is not neglected. Are they still drinking in the Capital the old wooden well water? Do they stick to the venerable urinal on the street corner? Are there chimneys on the houses? You know that these things go to make a civilized city. Asphalt, if flushed, not swept, prevented in some degree consumption. Cholera and typhoid fever have both a horror of pure water. Underground drainage prevents contamination of wells by cholera and dysentery germs. Chimneys do away with the necessity of charcoal fuel, the cause of beriberi, or carbonic acid gas poisoning, and are the first apparent characters which separate a house from a hut.

ALBERT S. ASHMEAD, M.D.

New York City.

DR. MORRIS MANGES has been elected professor of diseases of the chest and general medicine, in the New York Polyclinic, to succeed the late Dr. R. C. M. Page. Dr. Manges is a graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and has for some time past been connected with the Polyclinic.

IN HIS annual report to the trustees, President Seth Low of Columbia University stated that the interest charges on the debt of the College of Physicians and Surgeons is now approximately \$3500.

AT THE annual meeting of the Trustees of the University of the City of New York, November 6, Chancellor Henry M. MacCracken, stated, in his report, that the gifts to the University during the past year were a third of a million dollars in value, and that among them was a finely equipped hall for the Young Men's Christian Association in the east wing of the University and Bellevue Hospital Medical College.

THE REPORT of the secretary of St. John's Guild refers to the building of a new floating hospital, the gift of Mrs. Augustus Juillard, and of a commodious four-story addition to the Seaside Hospital at New Dorp, Staten Island, during the past year, which increased facilities have enabled the Guild to carry on a larger amount of charitable medical work during the past summer than ever before: 62,672 women and children were taken on the floating hospital excursions and 3799 patients treated.

THE NUMBER of children in the New York Institution for the Blind, at the end of the fiscal year just closed, was 169, a decrease from the previous year.

THE TRUSTEES of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary have decided to erect a pavilion for contagious eye diseases on property adjoining the infirmary.

FIVE WOMEN nurses, in charge of Miss M. E. Hibbard, sail from New York on the *Mesaba* of the Atlantic Transport Line, bound for England, and for the British hospital-ship *Maine* now being fitted out by American women for service in South Africa.

OPERATION ON BROKEN BACK.

The good results obtained at the Roosevelt Hospital in the recent case of Walter Duryea have stimulated other surgeons to emulate that brilliant example. On November 4, a similar operation was performed at St. John's Hospital, Brooklyn, on a telephone lineman, who had fallen from a telephone pole and fractured the spine. It is reported that the operation consisted in removing portions of the eighth, ninth and tenth dorsal vertebrae. The patient rallied well from the operation, and so far has given good grounds for believing that he will be greatly benefited.

SALE OF CARBOLIC ACID.

President Murphy, of the Health Department, has just declared war on the many druggists who sell carbolic acid without let or hindrance. He speaks of them as "suicide venders" and those who "sell death by the ounce," and asserts that as he has the Board of Pharmacy on his side—which, by the way, is the first time in thirty years that the College of Pharmacy has been in harmony with the Board of Health—he expects to win. That there is a just cause for action is shown by the ease with which the drug can be procured; not only is there no need to have a physician's prescription, but the druggists quite commonly make no pretense of even living up to the letter of

the Penal Code, which is itself very lax. During the nine months of the present year no less than 127 persons have committed suicide with carbolic acid.

STATE OR MUNICIPAL AID FOR HOSPITALS.

The question of the justice and expediency of hospitals receiving aid from the state or municipality has been kept quite prominently before the public in this city for the past year or two. Comptroller Coler's vigorous crusade against the time-honored custom of allowing many semipublic institutions to help themselves liberally from the public treasury has borne good fruit. A few days ago, at a hearing before the State Board of Charities, the president of the Mt. Sinai Hospital pointed to his institution as an example of the right way of dealing with this matter. He believes in granting state or municipal aid to hospitals only when they bring an appreciable measure of support and advantage to the city by making part provision for care of the sick poor who would otherwise be wholly a burden on the city. Since the incorporation of the Mount Sinai Hospital in 1852, that one has contributed over four million dollars, collected from private sources toward the support of the sick poor, and in all likelihood this amount would otherwise have had to come from the municipality. Last year, for the first time, and owing to a special emergency, the Hospital asked for and received a little aid from the city, but this, he thought, did not in any way vitiate the general principle he laid down.

Philadelphia.

TWO TRAINED nurses from this city have been engaged for the *Maine*, the hospital ship to sail from England, at an early date, for South Africa.

THE BENEFICIARIES of the Charity Ball are: the University and Jefferson hospitals, Southeastern Dispensary Hospital for Women and Children, and the Women's Directory.

THE TOTAL valuation of the estate of the late Dr. Pepper has been appraised at \$670,886.63. A life insurance policy of \$50,000 is included in the above sum.

DR. ALFRED E. TAYLOR was recently tendered a banquet at the University Club, in honor of his appointment to a chair in the faculty of the University of California, as noted in our news columns.

THE LOAN BILL which guarantees a system of filtration to this city, received a cordial indorsement at the polls on Tuesday last. The question now comes up whether this money will be spent as is hoped for.

THAT INSANITY may result from the excessive use of cigarettes has been discussed pro and con by physicians here during the past week. The case in point was one in which a man committed murder and afterward killed himself. It developed that he was addicted to this habit.

THE DEATHS occurring during the past week numbered 314, a decrease of 67 over those of last week and of 833 over the corresponding period of last year. The principal causes were: apoplexy, 13; nephritis, 18; cancer, 11; tuberculosis, 46; heart disease, 23; suicide, 1; diphtheria (117 cases), 24; scarlet fever (68 cases), 4; typhoid fever (36 cases), 8.

HEALTH OFFICER HELLER desires to begin fighting infectious diseases before they gain admittance into the city, and to this end is urging that the legislature be asked to provide a quarantine boat, fitted up for the reception and detention of all persons suspected of having been exposed, and that arrangements be at hand for the proper fumigation of the effects of such persons. The method advised is modeled after that in vogue in New York.

A CASE of considerable interest from a medicolegal point of view occurred during the past week. A man employed as a driver by one of the stores was charged with having collected \$19 and spent it in liquor. The charge was embezzlement, to which the man pleaded guilty. The judge, however, ordered the man to withdraw his plea and instructed him to enter one of not guilty. In the decision the judge said: "Where a firm entrusts with money a person whom they have reason to suspect of intemperate habits, and he does not appropriate the money to his own use or make off with it otherwise than to indulge in the gratification of his habit, employers must understand that it is extremely doubtful whether the crime of