

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.