

head being excluded, and a large spirit-lamp placed under the seat. In about a quarter of an hour, the perspiration streams down the skin. After a time the blankets must be removed, and the patient subjected to a douche of two pailsfull of cold water, and then dried with much friction. After which, a smart walk may be taken.—*Dr. C. Taylor.*

SYRUP OF CHLOROFORM.

May be prepared by the following formula :—10 parts by weight of chloroform are to be dissolved in 60 parts of oil of sweet almonds, 40 parts of gum added, and an emulsion formed with 350 parts of water. In this cold emulsion, placed in a close vessel, 540 parts of sugar are to be dissolved. It is a very stable syrup, rendering water white on admixture with it, and it contains exactly one hundredth of its weight of chloroform.—*L'Union Médicale*, No. 49.

NOTES ON THE NARCOTICS,

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An experienced medical practitioner, in a recent letter to his office student in attendance on medical lectures, advises him to acquaint himself thoroughly, during his term of study, with affections of the nervous system, as upon a thorough knowledge of these, and their treatment, his success in practice would mainly depend.

That this advice accords with the prevailing ideas of physicians, is especially obvious to the pharmacist, who, in comparing the recent prescriptions, on his files, with those of twenty years ago, cannot fail to notice the increased use of medicines primarily affecting the nervous system, instead of mercurials, drastic cathartics, blisters, and the like, formerly so much relied on.

From an analytical table of prescriptions which I prepared some five years ago, from my own files and those of several pharmaceutical friends, it appeared, that on an average 24 per cent. of prescriptions examined, contained either opium, morphia or hyosciamus, in one or other of their preparations, while the mercurials of all kinds, of which blue pill is now by far the most popular, were directed in 23 per cent. of the prescriptions; iodine and iodide of potassium in only 6 per cent., and though the files were examined with reference to the different seasons of the year, cinchona, and its alkaloids, only appeared in 9 per cent. of those written in Philadelphia. The preponderance, here shown, would, probably, be greatly increased in case of the preparations of opium, if the medicines dispensed without prescriptions were taken into account. Laudanum and paregoric are found in almost every dwelling, at all provided with medicines, while the great variety of carminatives and infant cordials, given so indiscriminately and so injudiciously, nearly all contain opium as their most active ingredient.

In estimating the reliance placed by physicians upon narcotics, by the data above given, allowance must be made for their extensive employment as correctives of the undue influence of agents primarily affecting the secretions. This is, indeed, one of their chief uses in prescribing, and in the case of opium, especially is, perhaps, often resorted to from habit, rather than from any indication in the symptoms.

Next to opium hyosciamus is the most popular of the class of cerebral stimulants; its relaxing effect upon the bowels secures its substitution for opium in very many instances; as an alterative, also, it shares with conium, belladonna, and stramonium, considerable reputation in appropriate combinations. The prophylactic effects of belladonna, its asserted specific influence on certain eruptive diseases, and its well known usefulness in ophthalmic surgery give its extract and alkaloid, atropia, prominent positions in the class. Conium is not unfrequently prescribed with sarsaparilla and the mercurials, while stramonium is less in repute for internal use than in ointments applied to