

OPIUM EATING.

Is there any sure and safe method of curing a person of the habit of opium eating, when that habit is confirmed by many years' use of the article? This is a question not important so much from the number of persons who contract and indulge this noxious practice, as from the intense desire generally felt, and often expressed, by the few who are so unfortunate as to be its slaves, to be rid of so dreadful an evil. There are not many in this country addicted to the free and constant use of opium; but every person of this description we have chanced to know, has manifested a strong sense of the impropriety and danger of the practice, and entreated us to prescribe, if possible, some effectual remedy. That remedy we have not yet found; and if it be known to any whose eye shall glance over these lines, we trust he will delay not in giving us and the profession all the information on the subject that he may possess.

When we allude to opium-eaters, we mean those only who took it originally as a medicine for some nervous affection, and continue it from necessity, rather than from choice—who take it, not to intoxicate, but to strengthen and balance the nervous system, and enable them to attend to business, and to appear like other people. Of those who take opium for purposes of unnatural excitement and inebriation, we have no knowledge. They need less of our sympathy, and would excite us less to exertions in their behalf.

A lady, for example, is now under treatment for a common disorder, who allows no visit to terminate without entreaties that something may be done to break up this habit, to which she has been many years a bound and servile slave. The drug was originally given to her to quiet a slight degree of nervous irritation. It answered the purpose to a charm. From a useless thing, lolling about in idleness and pain, a trouble to herself and an annoyance to all around her, she became composed in body and mind, and capable of performing her part as a wife and mother, a neighbour and friend. The effect, however, of the dose went off with the day, and each successive morning found her a spiritless, fretful, uneasy being, until a small pill brought her up again to health and usefulness. After a time she found it necessary to increase the dose. The same quantity failed to bring her up to the standard of health. And so it went on. Month after month, and year after year, she did well so long as she took her pill, but each month required a larger dose than the preceding. About a year ago she became alarmed at the prospect before her. Still young, and with a family of children, what must become of her a few years hence, when already an ounce a day scarcely sufficed to answer her purpose. She sent for me, stated her case in anguish, and prayed for a remedy.

No one had ever suspected this lady of using opium, or any other stimulus, for she had never, in any one instance, been in the least degree over excited by it. She had never taken more than she found necessary to enable her to attend properly to her family and friends. Her husband even knew it not. Could she have got along without increasing the dose, she would have continued to use it without much apprehension. But this was impossible. The prospect was full of horror, and she resolved to divulge her secret, and to seek a remedy.

Here was a case of the most touching character, and yet of the greatest difficulty. Suffice it to say, we devoted as much care and research to the case as it demanded. Every resource was tried, but without effect. Often have we seen this lady, whilst under course of gradual reduction or substitution, convulsed for hour after hour in every muscle, and vomiting almost without intermission; and yet she has insisted on bearing it all, and more by far than we ventured to advise, in the faint hope that she might yet become quiet without resorting to her accustomed dose. That hope has always vanished, and she is now going on in the same course as before—well in every respect, capable and agreeable, but supporting herself by increasing quantities of opium—alive

to the danger of her practice, and dreading it more than any degree of suffering that may attend any measure that may be adopted to arrest it, with the slightest prospect of success.

The case we have given as illustrative of the kind of opium-eating that we apprehend is most common with us, and that which calls most loudly for the sympathy and aid of the humane physician. Other cases are, perhaps, less aggravated; but in this, death must follow a sudden withdrawal of the stimulus. A gradual reduction of the dose has been tried in vain, and so has the substitution of other narcotics and anti-spasmodics.—*Medical Journal.*

RECOLLECTIONS.

[FROM POEMS BY THE HONOURABLE MRS. NORTON.]

Do you remember all the sunny places,
Where, in bright days long past, we played together?
Do you remember all the old home faces,
That gather'd round the hearth in wintry weather?
Do you remember all the happy meetings,
In summer evenings, round the open door—
Kind looks, kind hearts, kind words, and tender greetings,
And clasping hands, whose pulses beat no more?
Do you remember them?

Do you remember all the merry laughter;
The voices round the swing in our old garden;
The dog, that when we ran still followed after;
The teasing frolic, sure of speedy pardon?
We were but children then, young, happy creatures,
And hardly knew how much we had to lose;
But now the dream-like memory of those features
Comes back, and bids my darken'd spirit muse.
Do you remember them?

Do you remember when we first departed
From 'midst the old companions who were round us,
How very soon again we grew light-hearted,
And talked with smiles of all the links which bound us?
And after, when our foot-steps were returning,
With unfelt weariness, o'er hill and plain,
How our young hearts kept boiling up and burning,
To think how soon we'd be at home again?
Do you remember this?

Do you remember how the dreams of glory
Kept fading from us like a fairy treasure;
How we thought less of being famed in story,
And more of those to whom our fame gave pleasure?
Do you remember in far countries, weeping
When a light breeze, a power, hath brought to mind
Old happy thoughts, which till that hour were sleeping,
And made us yearn for those we left behind?
Do you remember this?

Do you remember when no sound woke gladly,
But desolate echoes through our home were ringing;
How for awhile we talked—then paused full sadly,
Because our voices bitter thoughts were bringing?
Ah me! those days—those days! my friend, my brother,
Sit down, and let us talk of all our woe,
For we have nothing left but one another—
Yet where they went, old playmates, we shall go—
Let us remember this.

A pilgrim, says the fable, met the plague going into Smyrna. What are you going for?—To kill three thousand people, answered the plague. Some time after they met again. But you killed thirty thousand, says the pilgrim. No! answered the plague, I killed three thousand—it was fear killed the rest!