

MORPHINISM.

Another class of patients who occupy exactly the same position as the alcoholic in the eyes of the law are the drug habitues.

These, if possible, are more to be pitied than the drunkard, for the latter, if his moral fiber is not entirely destroyed, sometimes effects his own cure. The drug habitue, however, cannot unaided, overcome his desires, and to effect a cure, isolation in some institution is absolutely necessary.

Under our present laws the private asylums only are open to him. The number of this class of patients in the Province is not large, and, even under existing conditions, could probably find accommodation in the public hospitals for insane. These patients, if taken in an early stage of the disease, would respond readily to treatment and a large percentage of cures would result. It is hard to imagine any valid reason why the law should not be amended so that this class could receive the benefits of the modern methods of treatment employed in our public hospitals for insane.

Only one case of this class was admitted to our Hospital during the period under review. This patient, a female, had taken morphine in large quantities, sometimes 30 grains a day, for upwards of ten years. When admitted she appeared to be a total wreck both mentally and physically, and for many weeks showed no signs of improvement. The morphine had been completely taken from her some weeks before admission and none was given to her afterwards. After about 3 months' gradual improvement began and at the present time says she feels better than she ever did in her life, having gained upwards of fifty pounds in weight. She says she has no further craving for morphine and is anxious to return to her work as a trained nurse. This case illustrates very