

to his knowledge; but the recollections of my hearers will doubtless bring before them many instances of confusion and delay caused by the fact of our having no properly constituted official guide for prescribing.

I will only mention one more instance out of others which I have met with in practice, and that was when, on taking the hospital duty of a friend, I prescribed 20 minims of belladonna for a child three years old. I shall never forget the consternation with which the pharmaceutical official presumed that I had dashed off at least 10 minims too many in the bustle and hurry of out-patient work, and his surprise when I told him that it was my common custom to prescribe much larger doses with benefit.

Now, although we have seen that the Medical Council did not primarily intend the British Pharmacopœia to be a rigid standard of dosage, and although they also expressly state that the quantities are "intended to represent average doses in ordinary cases for adults," we have also seen that the public have stamped a thoroughly official character on the book, and it has come to this, that the maximum and minimum quantities there enjoined are now all but universally held to represent the limits within which drugs may be safely or even legally prescribed. Let us, therefore, see in how far the teaching thus laid down is in accordance with modern therapeutics.

To begin then with conium, to which reference has already been made, we will find that the authorized dose of the succus is represented as varying from *mx.* to *ʒi.* Now the largest of these quantities is probably without any influence on the human frame, and it is hardly necessary for me to remind you that the experiments of John Harley have shown that we must give from one to four or six ounces before we can expect to derive real benefit from the drug, eight ounces even having been reached without ill effect.

Belladonna, again, is allowed in extract only up to half a grain, which is too small, and to *mxx.* of the tincture, which is far within the mark, as I have given from a drachm to *ʒijss.* to patients suffering from incontinence of urine with marked advantage.

There is also a curious timidity shown in the directions about quinine, 10 grains of which is held to be the maximum dose. Now, I suppose no fact in medicine is better established than the necessity for administering 20 or 30 grains, or even more, in bad cases of intermittent fever, and the valuable anti-pyretic properties of the drug only come into play when the dose reached is three or four times in excess of that allowed by the Pharmacopœia.

Then in the case of aconite two mistakes occur, the minimum quantity of *mv.* is too large, for we have all seen the remarkable power of drop doses frequently repeated in checking various inflammatory conditions, and the maximum is also too large, 15 minims being far from a safe prescription in the case of most adults who