

oldest and best of all the vegetable products of the B.P., opium, we find the most conspicuous example anywhere afforded in nature of this most despised, though, in the present case, most useful polypharmacy—for, besides gum, sugar, and other vegetable products, opium is said to contain no fewer than 17 to 18 different alkaloids, two neutral principles, and one peculiar acid; and so that a prescriber of this drug, even when he may perhaps be flattering himself that he is conforming strictly with present day notions of simplicity in pharmacy, is a polypharmacist of the worst and most pronounced type. And not only are the constituents of opium very numerous, but like the other drugs mentioned, it affords in its thebaine and morphine, a further illustration of direct physiological antagonism. Yet every practical physician knows full well that he can often obtain much more satisfactory results from the natural mixture of many principles, known under the name of opium, than from any single alkaloid which may be separated from it. In conclusion, I should like for a moment to direct your attention to an example or two of polypharmacy of a pre-eminently useful character, though much despised by many who have not taken the trouble to prove its worth. Here is a prescription of the late Dr. Graves:

R	Pulv. jalap,	
	Pulv. rhei.	
	Pulv. scammon.....aa	gr. v.
	Elaterii.....	gr. iss.
	Pot. bitart,	
	Pot. sulphat.....aa	5ss,
	Syrup, zingib.....	q. s

M fiat bolus.

Thus Dr. Graves used to treat, and well treat, as he tells us, many dropsical patients.

I can fancy the scornful curl of the lip of the very clever young pharmacological student of today as he runs his eye over this prescription, in which quick purgatives and slow ones, watery and simple ones, those which require an admixture with bile to ensure their activity, and those which act equally well when injected into the blood are all jumbled up together and finally massed into a bolus big enough for a horse; and if he happens to be as human as he is scientific, the contempt for such old-fashioned prescribers as Graves will be bleended with pity for the poor people who grew dropsical before the days when a minute powder of elaterium perhaps even a miniature pilule, and that pilule a sugared one, as representing what is termed the "elegant pharmacy" of the present time, would cure them *cito, tuto, et jucunde*.

If I had the misfortune to be generally dropsical, and could be permitted personally to choose between the two methods, I should feel sure that a complete evacuation of any intestinal contents, and not a mere watery discharge, would be effected, whereas by the other or "elegant" method I have seen fatal results ensue. I will merely mention

one other remedy compounded of many drugs which those who do know its value despise, and which those who do know will never consent to be beyond the reach of—Warburg's tincture, which has formed the subject of many controversies. There was one in 1375, when Professor Maclean published a formula for it. When it was known that quinine, aloes, rhubarb, angelica seeds, saffron, fennel seeds, prepared chalk, gentian root, cubebs, myrrh and camphor formed only some of its constituents, you may imagine the mirth that was excited in the minds of the scientific scoundrels.

I will only say this—at the Royal Southern Hospital I suppose we have the opportunity of acquiring as large a practical acquaintances with the various types of malarial fevers as can be acquired in any hospital in the kingdom, the "Dreadnought," perhaps, alone excepted, and my opinion has long been that in some of the more dreadful of these fevers, such as those termed "bilious remittent," where jaundice, high temperature, delirium, hæmorrhage, &c., form such a combination of symptoms as would seem almost to shut out the possibility of hope, life has again and again been saved by the administration of Warburg's tincture, administered in Warburg's manner, and would have been saved by no other means as yet made known to us. I do not know which, if any, of the numerous ingredients are useless, and until I do know this I prefer not to omit any; and lastly, I am ready to make the unmanly admission that if ever it should be my lot to be the subject of one of those terrible remittent or intermittents to which I have alluded, I should manifest a weak bias towards being cured by Dr. Warburg's polypharmacy, rather than being allowed to die according to the strictest rules of 19th century scientific pharmacology.—*Read at a meeting of the Liverpool Chemists Association.*

Darwinism Six Centuries Before Christ.— Anticipation of the Atomic Theory, and of the Germ Theory of Disease,

A recent number of that most excellent compendium of current literature, the *Literary Digest*, of Funk & Wagnalls, published an article entitled, "Darwinism Six Hundred Years Before Christ", which we produce below. As kindred matter, showing that the philosophers of Greece and Rome had adumbrations of many of the fundamental theories of modern science, anticipations of truth conceived too soon, by two thousand years, for general acceptance by mankind, we have added thereto notes showing that both the Atomic Theory of the nature of matter, and the Germ Theory of the causation of certain diseases, were advanced and boldly advocated by them long before our era. The following is the article of the *Digest*:

Special researches have been made by the historian, Oscar Reader, to show that in history, at