

judged by these standards, are not conscientious in their treatment of patients. Druggists with whom I have conversed inform me that a large percentage of "iron prescriptions" contain no caution whatever as to taking. Many patients indeed are not aware what medicine they are taking. During the past month I found two patients of mine taking an iron preparation prescribed, and in at least one of the cases dispensed, by a physician. No directions had been given and the patients did not know that any bad results might follow.

Even when physicians do their duty in this matter it is doubtful very often if the result is satisfactory. Let us look at some of the means employed. The medicine is prescribed in a very dilute form, in the hope that thus the injurious effects will be avoided. The experiments of Dr. Giblin, of Boston (to whose paper [International '92] before the Harvard Odontological I am deeply indebted), go to show that to dilute the tincture of iron with water is to increase its injurious effects. A tooth immersed in a strong solution will become incased in a hard coating of oxide, which will at once act as a protection from free acid, while the oxide formed on a tooth immersed in a weak solution is flocculent and non-protective. Even when patients are instructed by their physician to use a tube I question if many of them will exercise sufficient care to make it of much use, as the tube must be carried well back of the teeth to insure success.

That there is an increasing interest being taken in this important subject is evident from the number of proprietary preparations advertised in our drug journals, each claiming to have preserved all the promptness and efficiency of the tincture and at the same time to have eliminated all the dangerous effects. I fancy the price of these preparations will be an effectual barrier to their general use. The use of alkaline gargles before and after taking the medicine seems to commend itself to me as the best way of counteracting the bad effects. It certainly is not for us as dentists to say to physicians what remedies they shall use, as we cannot be expected to trace through the whole system the action of a particular drug; but when the results of their treatment so seriously mar our work, and if by care these results might be avoided, then we are surely at liberty to criticise this want of care and to tell the physicians of our patients how, in our opinion, these results might be avoided.

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