

prescriptions before and after the change went into effect and have been told that very few had done so. Physicians cannot expect that ten minims of the new tincture will have the same result as ten minims of the old. On the other hand the preparations of iron are generally prescribed in unnecessarily large doses and purgatives are ordered with a too lavish hand. As a consequence of this indifference, or ignorance, the physician fails to get results, and his confidence in the official drugs, and perhaps his confidence in himself as a prescriber, is impaired.

Associated with this imperfect knowledge of the exact action of drugs, and the indifference to the proper or necessary dosage in which they should be prescribed, an increasing tendency has been evinced by teachers in hospitals, by writers in many text-books, and often by consultants, to undervalue the use of our official drugs in the treatment and relief of symptoms. Very properly etiology, diagnosis and prognosis in disease are all important, but ailing patients demand some mitigation of their troubles and by means of our official drugs, properly employed in proper doses, we are able to give all possible relief. Psycho-therapy, the influence of one mind on another, moreover, is a welcome addition, and may undoubtedly be of much service; perhaps be all that is required, but its use demands tact and judgment.

Another fact which for many years has appeared to me as unfortunate, is that the list of drugs in our *Pharmacopœia* is such a long one. Even the last edition contains for each of us a large number which long ago we consigned to the dust-heap; such as most of our antispasmodics and of our astringents, many of our drastic purgatives, many of the so-called bitter tonics and stomachics; also the phosphates and hypophosphites so often vaunted to the general public as nerve food, and many other drugs of a problematical value which have been allowed to slide through our brain cells into the region of forgetfulness; and very properly so.

Shortly after I received the appointment of professor of therapeutics in McGill University, Sir William Osler—then to us simply “Osler”—on a visit to Montreal, came and congratulated me on my appointment. “Don’t teach the students many drugs, eight or ten are all that is necessary, but teach them these thoroughly,” he said. I did not agree with his limited number then, but year by year I am becoming more and more of his opinion. My list of valuable drugs lessens, and although I am not yet limited to ten, I yearly decrease the number of those taught to my students, and emphasize to them the greater importance of knowing