

goes further and deeper. Every man who trades in this market, whether he pockets the profits of the maker, the purveyor, or the advertiser, takes toll of blood. He may not deceive himself here, for here the patent medicine business is nakedest, most cold-hearted. Relentless greed sets the trap, and death is the partner in the enterprise.

The extent of the evil may to some extent be gauged by the fact that the retail price of all the patent medicines sold in the United States alone amounts to about twenty millions sterling per annum. What a nation's ransom to pay year by year to the Quack in Excelsis!

Testimonials are, of course, essential to the bloated quacks who thus play at dice with human lives—'conveying drugs' (as Voltaire phrased it) 'of which they know nothing into bodies of which they know less'. For convenience sake, we give hereunder a summary, from the June 'World at Work and Play,' of one of 'Collier's' articles telling how testimonials are procured:—

'Behind the patent medicine advertising stands the testimonial. "We rest on the evidence of those we have cured", cry the owners. "There are the letters." But are the writers of these letters really cured? Are the testimonials genuine? Are they honest? Mr. Adams (the writer of 'Collier's' articles) finds, as a result of his investigations, that almost all the newspaper-exploited testimonials are obtained at an expenditure to the firm. Agents are employed to secure them. Druggists get a discount for forwarding letters from their customers. Persons willing to have their pictures printed get a dozen photographs for themselves. Letters of inquiry answered by gifts of testimonials bring a price—25 cents. (1s) per letter usually. On the other hand, many testimonials which come unsolicited to the extensively advertised nostrums are both genuine and honest, but what of their value as evidence? For example, Mr. Adams tells us there is being advertised now a finger-ring which, by the mere wearing, cures any form of rheumatism. The maker of that ring has genuine letters from people who believe that they have been cured by it. No one but a believer in witchcraft would accept these statements, yet they are as genuine as the bulk of patent medicine letters, and written in as good faith. A very small percentage of the gratuitous endorsements get into the newspapers, because they do not lend themselves well to advertising purposes. "I have looked over the originals of hundreds of such letters, and more than 90 per cent. of them—that is a very conservative estimate—are from illiterate and obviously ignorant people". Yet there is much wisdom in Mr. Adams's observation that anybody's word is good enough for the average American when he goes into open market to purchase relief from suffering. If he sets out to buy a horse, or a house, or a box of cigars, he is a model of caution, and he would simply scoff if you showed him testimonials. But when he is seeking to buy the most precious of all possessions, sound health, he will give up his dollar, and stake his chance of poison, on a mere newspaper statement which he doesn't even investigate. Mr. Adams is, of course, writing for Americans, but we may doubt it, in the matter of gullibility, the average Englishman or Englishwoman is one whit behind the average American.'

And we doubt if the average New Zealander is one whit behind either in the simple and childlike faith with which he swallows patent medicines. Sydney Smith said: 'The best physicians are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merryman'—an adaptation of the old Latin dictum:—

'Si tibi deficiant medici, tibi flant
Haec tria: mens laeta, requies, moderata diaeta.'

If they fail, send for the doctor, not for the quack or quackhead nostrums.

The Government have decided to sub-divide the recently-acquired Corriedale Estate in the North Otago into eighteen or twenty farms, ranging in approximate areas, from 100 acres to 600 acres. Seven of the sections will be admirably adapted for dairying purposes, while the others were selected with a view to mixed farming. The Minister says that the property is in excellent heart, there yet remaining signs of the wealth of last year's grass.

Notes

Race Suicide

In the present year of grace, 1906, there are 1220 fewer children upon the school-rolls of Dunedin and suburbs, and 401 less in average attendance, than in 1891. During the same period (1891-1906) the population of Dunedin and suburbs rose from 45,869 to 56,024.

The Catholic Paper

'How often,' says the 'Catholic Citizen' (Milwaukee) 'has not every priest been asked what Catholics are to think of certain statements, alleged facts, or false principles, read in the newspapers, heard from the lecture platform, or urged in conversation by men and women, ignorant or prejudiced it may be, but too influential to be ignored? The priest regrets that his information or exposition in the case is given only to one person. He rightly wishes he could reach all Catholics likely to be perplexed by such utterances, and through them all the non-Catholics who honestly seek information from Catholic friends or neighbors. The Catholic newspaper gives him the opportunity of carrying out his wish.' The South African 'Catholic Magazine' deals in a recent issue with another phase of this subject. 'When,' it says, 'we have to deal with purely secular papers we soon discover that there is little hope of getting full justice done to our cause in any but a Catholic paper. The plain, full, and candid truth does not pay any daily paper; for the average man does not want the truth, but just so much of it as will suit his prejudices. In Mark Twain's phrase, he wants to economise the truth. Of all species of the truth, that about the Catholic Church pays least; because there always will be a prejudice against her. Our Lord has promised us this. The world hated Him, and will hate His Church. Only a paper chiefly devoted to the interest of Christ, of His Church, can afford to be frank in dealing with Catholic matters, and fervent in dealing with Catholic interests.'

Disease v. Wounds

Till the Japanese army medical corps showed how to conduct a campaign from the hygienic point of view, disease—not bullet or sabre—was the crowned king of terrors in war. In a recent letter to the London 'Times,' Mr. Brodrick, ex-Secretary for war, gives figures for South Africa, which, while they compare favorably with those of the Crimea, serve sufficiently to strip the tinsel from the pomp and circumstance of campaigning. 'The deaths per 1000 were,' says he, '69 from disease and 42 from wounds, but the admissions to hospitals were 746 per 1000 from disease and 34 from wounds. In other words, about 450,000 were passed through the hospitals for disease during the war, and 14,800 deaths occurred, whilst the admissions for injuries in action were only 22,000. The two great scourges of armies in the field are dysentery and enteric fever. These two diseases alone caused 74,000 admissions to hospital and 9200 deaths in South Africa. Yet both are, in medical opinion, largely preventable.'

Not to be Beaten

In a Home contemporary we have dropped across 'Reminiscences of Irish Sport,' by Captain Blackwell. The author tells how a keen-eyed, but very reticent 'boy' of thirty-five blossomed into speech when gently led into the subject that lay at the roots of his heart—sport. The Captain and the 'boy' (Mick o' the Goats) were out for the day with dogs and gun. Mick was the stranger's guide, and in sport the local know-all. The tap of conversation was quietly turned upon the chances of securing a good bag. The

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