

GAMBLING WITH MEDICINES

sculators Enrich Themselves at the Expense of Sick Humanity.

PRICE OF DRUGS ARTIFICIALLY RAISED

Heartless Combines Pluck Money from the Pockets of the Afflicted—How the Game is Worked and the Results.

W. Crawford Hirsch, until recently drug market editor of the Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter, presents in the New York Independent an instructive account drawn from his experience of the methods of drug speculators, by which the prices of drugs necessary to the sick are artificially raised and fluctuated for the benefit of the speculators. He says, in part:

There are many cases of sickness in which the physician prescribes a certain medicine the price of which nothing else can take. The saving of hundreds of human lives depends, therefore, upon the unrestrained supply of the cardinal drugs of pharmacy.

And yet two attempts to "corner" opium are part of the history of the drug trade, the speculator in this drug is as rampant today as ever. How vital a drug opium is may be seen from the following description of its medicinal properties, as given in the United States Dispensary:

Opium relieves pain more speedily and effectually than any other medicine taken into the human stomach. If possessed of no other property than this it would be entitled to a high consideration. Not to mention cancer and other instances of painful disease which are not only temporarily relieved, but entirely cured by the remedy, there is scarcely a complaint in the catalog of human ailments in the treatment of which it is not occasionally demanded for the relief of suffering, which, if allowed to continue, might aggravate the disorder and protract, if not prove a cure.

Evidence of a Combine. That the speculators think no less of opium than the physicians is conclusively proven by the fact that some years ago they sent prices within a single week from \$4.67 1/2 to \$7 a pound. The present wholesale price of opium is twice that of 1892 and 10 per cent higher than in the early part of the year. As an explanation for this continual fluctuation in the price of opium, the speculators have recourse to the threadbare phrase of the lay of demand and supply and the uncertainty of the opium crop in Turkey, from which country all medicinal opium comes. Both explanations are not valid. During the past eight years a total of 114,530 cases of opium have been grown in Turkey, an average of 6,265 cases a year. The world's demand is between 4,000 and 5,000 cases a year at the most, so that, as a matter of fact, there is a considerable surplus of the supply over the demand. Millions have been made and lost in opium speculation, and it is not an unusual thing to read in the so-called market reports of the drug trade papers that "stocks of opium are well covered and traded," which means in effect that if an epidemic were to cause a large demand for opium, the price of saving human lives would be arbitrarily fixed by one or two speculators.

While there is in New York no regular drug exchange, such as that in Mining Lane, London, the speculators are kept in touch with one another through the medium of brokers who execute buying and selling orders for drugs much as the stock broker does for stocks and bonds. Without fear of contradiction, the broad statement can be made that not a single crude drug passes into the hands of the druggist on the basis of cost plus a legitimate profit, as one would suppose. That has happened, "the market is tight," which means in effect that if an epidemic were to cause a large demand for opium, the price of saving human lives would be arbitrarily fixed by one or two speculators.

Quinine. In some instances the "bears" have been known to resort to the "bulls." Quinine today sells wholesale at 4 1/2 cents an ounce. Some years ago the market price was \$5 an ounce. Allowing for the 20 per cent duty which was then imposed on quinine, as well as for the comparatively slight decrease in the cost of manufacture, there still remains a difference of several dollars an ounce between the present price of quinine and that of twenty-five years ago. Into whose pockets did those \$2 or \$3, for each ounce of quinine traded, flow? Largely into those of speculators. And who paid them? The sufferer from fever or malaria. As late as five years ago quinine was quoted at twice its present price and yet the cost of manufacturing was no greater than today. A London speculator who figured that quinine would go up to \$100,000 a ton in a year or so ago. His losses to date amount to \$100,000, but he is still holding the \$100,000 ounces for a rise, as they say in Wall street parlance.

Cocaine. Cocaine, the most popular anesthetic of the present day, was recently taken in New York by the speculators. The quotations are about half of what they were five years ago. On the other hand, the "bulls" have doubled the price of cascara sagrada, a drug that many practitioners consider as the most valuable laxative known to medicine.

The most high-handed maneuver in recent years was that engineered a few months ago, when a speculator cornered all available stocks of pink root (spizella), the most powerful antiseptic known to medicine. In January the root could be had at 45 cents a pound. The speculator who succeeded in cornering the market sent the price to \$1.25, sold his holdings at that figure, and today quotations are once more at the normal figure of 50 cents.

Guarana, a valuable drug, first prescribed by Dr. Garvella, physician to Dom Pedro, the late emperor of Brazil, could be had a few months ago for 75 cents a pound. A speculator managed to concentrate stocks in his hands and to double the price.

Potassium bromide, a medication which has been employed in almost all diseases to which human flesh is heir, and which is still esteemed by physicians as one of the most valuable drugs in nervous ailments, epilepsy and chorea, can be had today at half its last year's price, because the "bears" have proved more powerful than the "bulls."

One might extend this list of "doctored" values to include almost every drug of the kind that is not the subject of a monopoly by powerful interests that fix prices arbitrarily. The most conspicuous example of this kind is iodine. Aside from the fact that the price put on this drug by the syndicate that controls its production is out of all proportion to the actual cost, there are only a few favored firms to whom the syndicate will sell direct, and these must pay for their purchases long before they receive them. The price of mercury, as every one knows, fixed by the Rothschilds, whose word is law with the American miners of quicksilver.

It is no exaggeration to say that fortunes are made and lost every year in drug speculation. And who foots the bill? The unfortunate clerk who are too proud to partake of the charity of a free hospital and the taxpayers who have to pay for the medical treatment of the indigent. The use of food and drug law, which goes into effect next year, will remedy one great abuse, that of adulterated drugs. One need not be a socialist to wish for legislation that would put a stop to gambling with drugs.

Drugs are not a commercial commodity; they are a human necessity. The standard of civilization of a people is justly measured by their regard for human life. Surely Americans do not want to see the means of saving or prolonging human life the plaything of the most despicable variety of speculation extant.

AS CARL SCHURZ SAW THEM Seward the Sorcerer and Douglas the Parliamentary Puffin in the Old Senate.

In the second section of the late Carl Schurz's reminiscences, now running in McClure's Magazine, are two interesting chapters on Seward and Douglas. "There was to me something mysterious in the small, wiry figure, the thin, shallow face, the overhanging eyebrows and the muffled voice of Seward. I had read some of his speeches and admired especially those he had delivered on the compromise of 1850."

"The broad sweep of philosophical reasoning and the boldness of statement and prediction I found in them, as well as the flow of their language, had greatly captivated my imagination. I had pictured him to myself, as one is apt to picture one's heroes, as an imposing personage of overbearing mien and commanding presence."

It was much disappointed when I first saw that quiet little man, who, as he moved about on the floor of the senate chamber, seemed to be on as friendly terms with the southern senators as with the northern. His speeches were always personally polite to everybody—and whose eloquence was of full sound, hardly distinct, and never had a resonant note of personal attack or defiance in it.

ODD ENDS OF THE ELECTION

Quaint Features Observed as the Smoke of Battle Lifts.

NEW THINGS TRIED IN POLITICS

Conspicuous Men in Eclipse, Obscure Men in the Limelight—Motor Cars Essential to the Modern Campaigner.

The November battle of the ballots produced changes in the aspect of candidates as well as the shifting scenes of a kinetoscope. The lights and shadows of the morning after fall on good and bad alike, revealing scenes alike instructive and amusing.

Tom Johnson inaugurated the automobile as a political vehicle when campaigning Ohio a few years ago, but it was left for the rival candidates for governor of New York to introduce the new mode of conveyance to an essential in whirlwind campaigning. If a number of speeches had to be made in one night at different meetings far apart the candidate found an automobile very convenient in traveling from one meeting to the other. As soon as he finished with his speech he hurried out of the hall and jumped into an automobile which was waiting at the door. The chauffeur had his orders and knew just where the candidate was going, and in a brief time the automobile pulled up before the door of the second meeting place. This saved the candidate a great deal of trouble and time.

Simplified spelling had its innings in one of the assembly districts of Brooklyn. The rivals were Thomas J. Surpless, republican, and William F. Coon, democrat. Mr. Coon (that is the way he spells it himself) went to Louis Sulzmann, a printer, to have his campaign literature printed. Sulzmann is a Jewish follower of Brander Matthews, and believes in simplified spelling. Coon's campaign literature soon made its appearance.

There are about 2,500 Jews in the Sixth assembly district, so two sets of campaign literature were printed, one in English and the other in Yiddish. There is no C in Yiddish and Sulzmann spelled Coon Koo-n in the Hebrew literature and Co-oon in the English edition, and it is what caused the defeat of Coon and gave the republican a surplus.

Maurice Kahn, leader of the republican party of the district, saw good campaign material in Sulzmann's literary efforts, and the republican committee had the Jewish voters that Coon had named as Kohn when he wanted the Gentile vote, and posed as Coon to them and as Kohn only to the Jews. Coon dented there was any rise intended, but Surpless was elected by a plurality of 90.

Uplift of a Pie Baker. During the sessions of the New York democratic convention there was little or no attention was paid to the selection of the nominee except the head of the ticket and his running mate, Lewis Stuyvesant Chandler. The latter was selected by unanimous consent by the Murphy-Hearst conferees, having been named by the Independent League for lieutenant governor. But to the selection of the other candidates no attention was paid until the last minute.

"Get me a Dutchman for state treasurer," said Murphy to ex-Senator Bailey of Suffolk county. The name of the Dutchman for the place, because the other side has put one up."

So Senator Bailey went out and got him a Dutchman in the person of Julius Hauser, a peaceful baker at Sayville, L. I., who never dreamt that he would be a candidate for high political honors until he received a telegram announcing his nomination as state treasurer. And now the returns show that Mr. Hauser is elected and that he will have to quit baking bread and pies for Sayville for the next two years.

Moran of Massachusetts. Another much advertised candidate who went down to defeat was John Brown Moran, who ran for governor of Massachusetts on the democratic ticket. He is a radical of radicals and for some time after he was nominated there were bickerings in Boston as to whether he was the William W. Hearst of Massachusetts. Whether Mr. Hearst was the John B. Moran of New York.

They were much alike as far as parties and platforms went, the chief difference in this respect being that Moran had one nomination more than Hearst, the Massachusetts foe of the trusts being endorsed by the prohibitionists.

A radical difference was that Hearst had lots of money and Moran none. His only asset was his name, but he considered that asset ample after he had been elected governor this year, and next year he would not be either for Bryan or Hearst for president in 1908, but would favor a Massachusetts man. His shrinking modesty forbade his getting closer than that to the identity of the candidate.

Moran has been but a short time a factor in the democratic politics of Massachusetts. He elected himself district attorney of Suffolk a year ago, when everybody stood around and jeered and wondered how badly he would be beaten. It seemed so easy for his opponent, who had been nominated by both of the great parties, that nobody bothered much about Moran, who hurtled himself through Boston night after night and told the people what he would do if elected.

He made the grand jury an instrument of torture for the people of Boston. He elected many well known citizens indicted and he haled everybody he could think of, and more that were thought of for him, before that body.

If any man made a charge involving a violation of the law Moran had everybody concerned in the charge before the grand jury. He had the legislature there on the board of aldermen and Senator Lodge and dozens of others.

He smote right and left and then announced that he would be a candidate for governor. The conservatives had picked out Henry M. Whitney for the democratic candidate, but he was beaten by Moran in the convention.

Temperance in Kentucky. Still another queer freak of politics was the virtual election of the senate of the United States of J. C. W. Beckham of Kentucky, who is only 32. Although Kentucky is famous for its whisky, it was the temperance vote which pulled Mr. Beckham through.

He was first elected to the legislature when he was 21. Since then he has been governor of the state and administered defeat to two United States senators in twelve months. They are J. C. S. Blackburn and James B. McCreary, who had been in politics in Kentucky for thirty years and who were regarded as past masters of the craft almost before Governor Beckham was born.

This year Governor Beckham entered the race against Senator McCreary and by the vote he got in the primaries he will be the democratic nominee for senator before the next legislature. Several weeks ago he announced that all the senators of the state must be closed on Sunday and the moral temperance people voted for him to the primaries.

Upon Sinclair of Patchingtown fame was among the candidates this year, running for congress on the socialist ticket in the Fourth New Jersey district, which includes



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WOOD PULP AND RUSHES

Paper Mills Seek Raw Material Elsewhere Than in Forests. What becomes of the ship that sinks in the first place? If it is of wood it takes, in the first place, considerable time for it to reach the bottom. In 190 or more fathoms of water a quarter of an hour will elapse before the ship reaches bottom. It sinks slowly, and when the bottom is reached it falls gently into the soft, oozy bed, with no crash or breaking. Of course, if it is laden with pig iron or corresponding substances, or if it is an iron ship, it sinks rapidly and sometimes strikes the bottom with such force as to smash it in pieces. Once a ship is broken up, the prey of the countless inhabitants of the ocean. They swarm over and through the great boat and make it their home. Besides this, they cover every inch of the boat with a thick layer of lime. This takes time, of course, and when one generation dies another continues the work, until finally the ship is so laden with heavy incrustations, corals, sponges and barnacles that, if wood, the creaking timbers fall apart and slowly but surely are absorbed in the waste at the sea bottom. Iron vessels are demolished more quickly than those of wood, which may last for centuries. The only metals that withstand the chemical action of the waves are gold and platinum, and glass also seems un-

SAW AN ANGEL IN VISION

It Gave Man a Recipe Nearly Fifty Years Ago that Made Him a Fortune. The records at the patent office in Washington show that nine-tenths of the patents of Maine are granted on applications filed in March and April, indicating that the men who make the inventions do their heavy thinking and contriving during the long winter evenings, when the homes are walled by snowdrifts and when so company comes in to divert the attention of the inventors into frivolous channels. In addition to novel and useful ideas and designs secured to the inventors of Maine by patents, there are scores of Maine men who have found out secret processes and curious combinations. Nearly fifty years ago, when the Fox sisters and spirit rappings were being discussed, old Hiram Simpson, a stone cutter and dreamer, moved from his home, near the quarries of Blue Hill, into Hancock county and took up a farm on the side of Mr. Hoagan, in Prospect, Waide county, making the journey by ox team and carrying his family and household goods in a hayrack. As the weather was warm, he traveled by night. While he was walking along the highway, near Orlando, one midnight, swinging his goatstick and managing his oxen, "an angel of the Lord" came down to him from the top of a hill beyond Tody Pond, he declared, and imparted a recipe for making just the kind of red chalk granite cutters needed for marking granite. For years inventors had been trying in vain to produce the chalk. Simpson remembered that the angel had told him and when he had collected slabs and driftwood enough from the river to build a shelter for his family he constructed a kiln from stones from the field, and, digging blue clay from the brooks and mixing it with ochre and other ingredients, he shaped the raw mud into squares and baked it until it was a tallowy consistency. As soon as he had cooled enough to

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