

THE SUPERSTITION OF DOPE

OUR ATTITUDE toward the victim of the drug-habit is still strongly modified by what Willard Huntington Wright calls "literary superstition." In an article contributed to *The Medical Review of Reviews* (New York, June), Mr. Wright accuses even the medical profession of being actuated, in their treatment of those addicted to narcotics, by both "puritanism and imaginative literature." In short, we are all prone to think that the victim of morphin or of cocain is a sinner rather than a patient; we are mixing up morals and pathology. The average physician, says Mr. Wright, gives comparatively no thought to the subject: he regards it, not as a branch of his own profession, but as a semisocial problem for economists and lawmakers. When a drug-addict applies to him for relief, he indulges in a moral reprimand and recommends a sanitarium. He does not realize that the question is as much a medical one as the question of any ordinary and prevalent disease. And even the drug specialist, who does profess to know something about the subject, errs in the same way, Mr. Wright avers. He says:

"I have yet to read one book written by these experimenters which does not show strong influences of the literary superstition regarding drugs and their effects. Consequently the results have been far from satisfactory. Drug-addiction is a disease. The fact that it is self-imposed does not alter its status, any more than self-imposed indigestion changes the character of dyspepsia. And until doctors so regard it there will be little success in its treatment. Just so long as the drug-habit is approached socially or morally, just so long will it evade being conquered.

"A wholly impersonal and scientific attitude is indeed difficult under the present circumstances, and I do not wish these remarks to be considered as malignantly critical of those men who are now working along this line. They are confronted by many obstacles and difficulties—by public opinion, by apathy in the very profession to which they should look for assistance, by generations of false conceptions, by a miasma of unreasoning puritanism which tends to obscure the unsentimental truth, by hasty and *ex cathedra* legislation, by a colossal mass of literary superstitions, and by the contradicting and deceiving evidence which the subject itself presents."

The so-called moral effects of drug-addiction Mr. Wright regards as wholly illusory. Some of them are due simply to the fact that the drug disease is a painful one.

"The truth of the matter is that the criminal acts of drug-addicts which can be directly traced to the use of narcotics are not the symptoms of the drug-habit, but, on the contrary, are the symptoms of indigestion, mucous diarrhea, and nervous collapse. It is unnecessary here to go into so common a subject as the irresponsibility of persons in excruciating pain. A man in a common state of mental irritation or anger will do things for which he is thoroughly ashamed when he has become rational. Why, therefore, should a man be condemned as a moral degenerate who commits crimes in a state of almost unbearable physical agony—especially as those crimes have a direct bearing on his recovery?

"I will go so far as to say that no physician has yet shown the morally degenerating action of drugs. I have inspected scores of cases wherein there has been the hypothesis of moral decrepitude, and I have failed to find a single convincing piece of evidence. If, as is so often claimed, moral degeneracy sets in and the user is deprived of all sense of decency and will-power, how can any cure be effected? Why, in fact, should a cure be attempted? Will relieving a man of drugs recreate this high moral sense?

"The inconsistencies of the present system are too numerous to record. A new attitude is needed. And the first consideration toward an intelligent conception of the subject is to rid one's mind once for all of the moral superstition in regard to drugs; for there is no convincing proof that drug-using and moral degeneracy are any more related than any trying disease and morality are related. Until we reach a state of ignorant barbarism where one will punish men for acts under extreme physical duress—such as those committed by a man lost at sea and crazed with thirst—it would be more in keeping with the age of enlightenment to regard the acts of drug-users crazed

by enforced abstinence in the same light as we do the acts of any other victims of physical and mental suffering."

Mr. Wright regards the "tapering-off" method as the logical one for the cure of the habit, and he devotes several pages to marshaling the reasons for his belief. He says here, among other things:

"It is essential in the treatment and cure of narcotic drug-addicts that there should exist a conscientious and earnest desire to be free of the drug; and this desire can be and often is created in the patient by giving him a clear understanding of the fatal effects upon his body by his continuing to use the drug, and also by impressing upon him the fact that a cure is not painful. The average drug-addict shrinks from a cure because of the suffering he imagines to be connected with it, and which actually does accompany it when the physician is ignorant of the proper methods."

"SCRAMBLING" SCIENCE

"SCRAMBLED SCIENCE" is what we are getting in our high and preparatory schools, according to Prof. R. A. Millikan, of the University of Chicago. In an address made to the Lake Superior Teachers' Association and printed in *School Science and Mathematics* the speaker, himself one of the most noted American men of science, vigorously states his belief that our national prestige depends on our ability to master and apply nature's laws. This means some instruction in science for our boys and girls. In our attempt to give it, Professor Millikan says, we are "scrambling" it—mixing up different sciences and different methods in such a way that the result is merely a confusion of ideas. Said the speaker:

"Can there be the slightest doubt that our ability as a nation to keep in the forefront of human progress is going to be very nearly proportional to our success in mastering nature's laws and in applying them in our industries and our commerce? This is what has determined national greatness in the past century, and it is what, in all human probability, will determine it in the next. Whether it be in the struggles of peace or of war, it is in the long run the nation which knows which wins. And the nation which knows not is doomed. England's industrial supremacy has rested upon what? Upon Watt and Faraday. It was no accident that these were Britons. Britain is because these men and others like them were. Germany's recent commercial prosperity has come from what? Largely from her chemical Ph.D.'s. Without these chemists and their power to get nitrogen from the air, Germany in this war would long since have gone under. We as a people have had some scientific successes, but we must have many more if we are even to survive. I am proud to be able to say that the great science and the great art of speech-transmission, to cite one example, are wholly American. There is not a foreign thread anywhere in the fabric of its development. It was conceived independently by the two Americans, Bell and Gray, immensely extended by Pupin with his loading coils, and the chapter has now been closed in a sense by the practically perfect transmission of undistorted speech without wires a third of the way around the earth by a group of American Ph.D.'s and engineers, three or four of whom, I am proud to say, have taken their degrees at the University of Chicago. This is a great achievement, and one which augurs well for our future, but it is not enough to secure it. Our national prosperity—yes, our national life itself—depends upon our further success in stimulating and rendering effective scientific and industrial research, and this in turn depends upon the appreciation and fostering of science by the king of our great land—the common people. And where are they going to get that appreciation and that willingness to foster, save in the public schools?"

Are they getting it? asks Professor Millikan. He answers by pointing to the fact that as soon as science ceases to be obligatory in the schools, the pupils generally drop it. The common assumption is that the pupils are not interested in science as it is taught. Hence the doctors are "bringing up all sorts of sugar-coated pills, which are guaranteed to be palatable, whether efficacious or not." He goes on:

"One says: Drop out a formal physics course entirely, and

slip in the principles of physics while the children are running their toy motors or their automobiles. I shall call this remedy 'toy science,' and I use the term merely to describe, not to derogate. Another labels his remedy 'project science,' and argues that, while the pupils are figuratively swallowing a delightful tennis game, it is possible, unknown to them, to slip in a spoonful or two of the wholesome castor-oil of physics. A third scrambles all the sciences into a delicious potpourri, and calls it 'general science.'"

Professor Millikan, however, does not credit the diagnosis that leads to these proposed remedies. If the small number of those who elect science argues lack of interest in it, how about Latin? This language is studied by 60 per cent. of high-school students. Does this mean that they are vitally interested in it? The trouble is not with lack of interest, we are assured, but is due to crowding the sciences into the last high-school year, and to the expansion of the curriculum, which pushes them out altogether because they "have been put up in tabloid form instead of being made a sequence." The colleges have helped by dropping out physics as one of their entrance requirements. What shall we do? At any rate, says Professor Millikan, let us not try to do several incompatible things at once. If we must "scramble" our sciences by teaching them all together in a course of "general" science, let us not follow this by an attempt to "unscramble" them by teaching them separately. He says:

"From whatever point of view we look at it, the 'general science' course introduced into the curriculum along with the individual sciences represents a woful educational and economic waste for those students who take the full high-school course, and it is these students alone who are under discussion in the present address. The two methods simply will not mix. The scrambling of the sciences in the early years of the course and unscrambling of them in the later is like a new patch on an old garment. It is wrong in principle and pernicious in practise. The only possible alternatives are to present the whole high-school science course in the scrambled form, or else to scramble none of it. As to the former plan, it has not thus far been suggested, and if it were I should not expect it to be carried out.

"My own plan, and here I come to what seems to me to be the remedy for the existing situation, is not to scramble the sciences at all, at least so far as a text is concerned, but, first, to let the student begin a definite systematic course in science the year he enters the high school, and a course the end of which he will be given to understand is at least two or three years ahead. In a word, I would have done with the pellet form of science instruction. I anticipate no difficulty in getting students to enter such a course. Indeed, every principal knows that his advice determines quite largely the average student's so-called choices."

LIGHTING THE CAPITOL DOME

THE OLD METHOD OF ILLUMINATION was to make the illuminated objects sources of light—to cover them with lamps or to install great search-lights upon them. This illuminates the surrounding region rather than the object that it is desired to make conspicuous. The later way is better—to place the lights outside of the object and so direct their rays upon it that it will shine forth in glory while the sources of illumination are hidden. This is the method now used to illuminate the Capitol dome at Washington.

Says a writer in *The Electrical Review and Western Electrician* (Chicago, June 2):

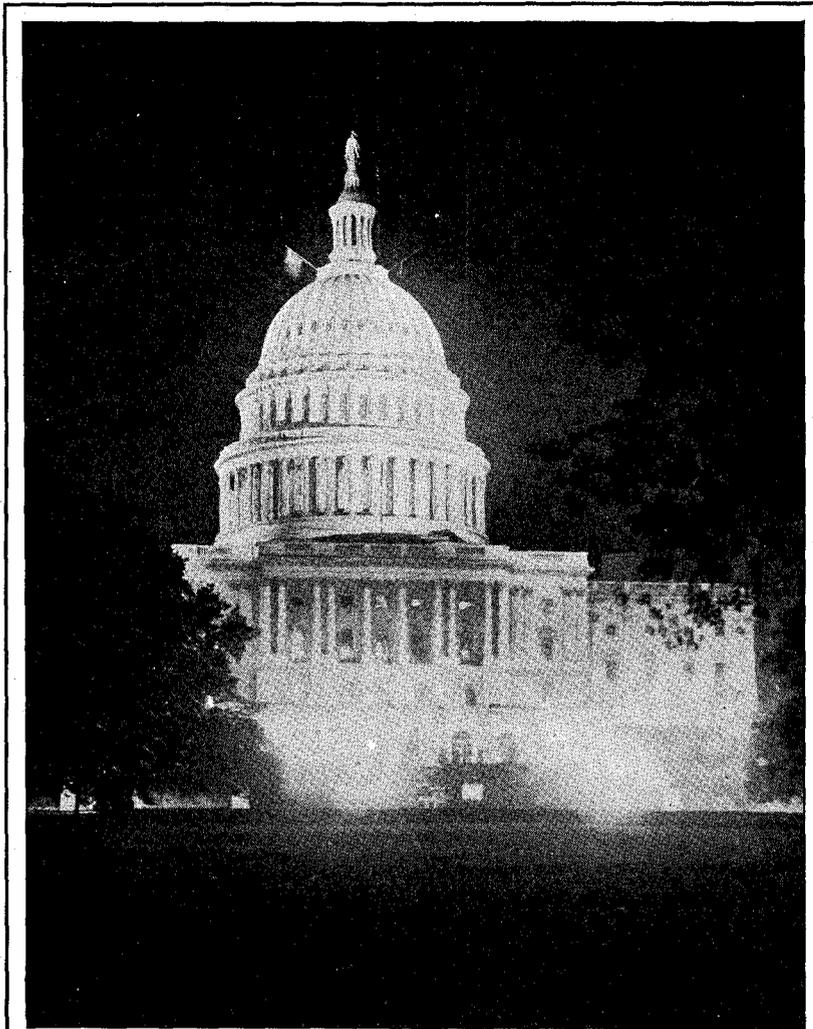
"Against the somber shadows of night, at this critical moment in our history, the inspiring white dome of our Capitol at Washington, high above the Federal City, stands resplendent in rays of shining light—a radiant monument to freedom and democracy. The plans for illuminating the Capitol dome were perfected for the recent inauguration of President Wilson, and the spectacular results were so satisfactory that the system has been made permanent.

"Flood-lighting was the method used to illuminate the great dome, which is 135 feet in diameter at the base, 218 feet high above the roof, and is surmounted by a bronze statue of 'Freedom.' Eighty-four . . . projectors, each one equipped with a 400-watt . . . lamp, were used. These projectors were placed in four banks, located about two hundred feet from the dome, on the corners of the House and Senate wings. By placing the

projectors in these positions it was possible to throw the light from different directions on the thirty-six columns at the base (representing the thirty-six States in the Union at the time the Capitol was designed), and thus eliminate excessively dense shadows. Some shadows are desirable to bring out the architectural beauty, but if the shadows are too pronounced they become objectionable.

"The building proper was also lighted to a low intensity, to form a setting for the dome and to relieve the contrast between a very light dome and a dark building. The building is about 750 feet long and 250 feet wide. The central portion, or main building, is of sandstone painted white, and the House and Senate wings at the ends are of white marble. Surrounding the building on three sides is a wide concourse bounded by a parapet. Thirty-four flood-lighting projectors, each equipped with a 400-watt flood-lighting lamp, were mounted on the ornamental posts that are placed on this parapet. These posts were originally designed to take large opal globes. Most of these globes were removed and blocks of treated wood were placed in the fitters to which the projectors were bolted.

"This illumination has attracted a great deal of attention and favorable comment not only from residents of Washington, but from the thousands of visitors from all parts of the country and from abroad."



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