

'POISON NEEDLE' AGITATION IS ALL HYSTERIA

BY HERBERT QUICK.

(Copyright, 1913, by the Newspaper Enterprise Association.)

I'm sure we are all greatly interested in the letter of Miss Nixola Greeley-Smith on the "poisoned needle," but I for one desire to fo on record as a skeptic.

Have you ever seen the giving of a hypodermic injection of any sort? Most people have in these days. The nurse or physician has to take between his thumb and finger a pinch of the flesh. Then he carefully in-



Herbert Quick.

serts the needle into and through the skin.

And this hurts the patient—it hurts horribly. Sometimes when the patient is suffering some excruciating agony he does not mind it much, because the lesser hurt of the needle is swallowed up in the greater pain of the disease or injury. But I have had a hypodermic given me in cold blood, and when I was feeling pretty well, and I can state without any qualification that it hurts.

Then the element of time is necessary. The piston of the needle has to

be pressed down and the liquid forced out into the flesh. It doesn't flow out of its own accord, but has to be squeezed out. The tissues at the point of the needle have to be torn apart by the pressure of the liquid injected. It takes a moment of time for this to be done—and while the tissues are being separated the operation hurts. If it were spirited into the flesh with an instantaneous thrust, it would hurt still more—if it could be done at all.

These are mere truisms of common sense.

There is no drug which can be smeared on the point of a needle, and pricked into the flesh, which will produce the results described in this poisoned-needle hysteria. Any drug so smeared on a needle would be wiped off in passing through the clothing. And there is no such drug.

The poisons used by the savages who tip their arrows with venom are so deadly that they produce death. That's what they are used for. There are several virulent poisons which may be shot into the flesh on an arrow; but they must go with a considerable wound—and they kill. A dead girl is of no use in "The white slave" traffic.

Those hysterical people who have been deceived by this outcry have mentioned hyoscine as the drug used; but no physician has been found who has not said that a dose of hyoscine which would stupefy would either kill or cause a long and deadly illness.

Moreover, its action is quite unlike the symptoms described.

Please picture yourself, my sensible girl reader, as sitting still while a hypodermic of anything is given you in a street car or theater! Imagine yourself, my sympathizing male reader, sitting with a hatpin jabbed into your flesh a quarter or half an inch without your knowing that something severe was being done to you, and just about what it was!