

Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing

Papers Presented at the Fifty-Ninth Convention

A FEW QUESTIONS SUGGESTED BY COMPARISONS OF THE NATIONAL PHARMACOPOEIAS.

OSCAR OLDBERG.

The twenty national pharmacopœias differ greatly in many ways. Among the differences between them are the following, which I mention as illustrations:

The Pharmacopœia of the United States (Ed. IX, or "Eighth Revision") is a book of about 350,000 words, and describes about 1000 drugs, chemicals and preparations.

The Swiss pharmacopœia (Ed. IV) contains 853 articles or titles described in about 192,000 words.

The German pharmacopœia (Ed. IV, soon to be replaced by Ed. V) gives 108,000 words to 627 titles.

The Swedish pharmacopœia (Ed. IX) devotes 105,600 words to 685 titles.

That of Finland (Ed. IV) gives less than 30,000 words to 439 titles.

The new French Codex of 1908 is a book of a thousand pages from cover to cover and contains about a thousand titles. It is a great improvement upon the previous edition but differs so much in its general construction from the other pharmacopœias that it can not be briefly compared with them.

The examination of the texts with the view to discover the causes of these great differences has taught me some profitable lessons.

The American pharmacopœia (Ed. IX) contains, besides the 513 pages of text numbered in common numerals, 75 pages of introductory matter paged with roman numerals, and an appendix of over 120 pages not including the index.

The practical question might be asked: Cannot the size of our pharmacopœia be materially reduced without disadvantage? Is it desirable to devote as much as ten pages to the "historical introduction"?

The national pharmacopœia of any country is a document so important that a year is not too long a time to devote to the consideration of such general questions as are herein suggested, and to so much of the recommendations of the Brussels Conference as concerns the proposed uniformity in pharmacopœial nomenclature. The conference proposals relate only to "potent remedies," but it is improbable that any pharmacopœia will adopt more than one system of nomenclature.

The writer of this paper believes that a consistent technical pharmacopœial nomenclature is highly desirable. At the same time *it is of the utmost importance that when prescriptions are written for medicinal substances contained in the*

pharmacopœia such medicines shall be ordered under their principal pharmacopœial titles according to which they are arranged alphabetically in the body of that book.

So important is this phase of that question that everything within reason should be done to promote a favorable attitude toward the pharmacopœia among the physicians, and we should avoid doing anything that may operate against it.

There are already in our pharmacopœia some titles which have had an unfavorable effect in the direction referred to.

A number of physicians of the highest standing declare that they have not found it difficult to master the long titles recently introduced and that they are pleased with them. Others use them under protest. Still others, of equally high professional standing, say that they are too busy to seriously consider any proposition that they learn and use a new style of prescription writing different from that to which they are accustomed. They will not lay aside their present way of writing until after it shall have been demonstrated that the public welfare, medical science, and the welfare of their patients will be promoted by the change proposed.

There are countries in which the government can introduce mandatory regulations which will be at once obeyed without question; but in America an order to the physicians that they must use one name but not another in writing their prescriptions would meet with derision.

If we have done aught to hinder a more free use of the pharmacopœia by the doctors let us by all means seek to mend the damage by henceforth pursuing an opposite course.

The pharmacopœia and its full and free recognition and use are so important to the American Pharmaceutical Association and to all pharmacists that a special section to be called THE SECTION ON THE PHARMACOPOEIA should be at once created. Such a section is of greater importance than any other and we should have started it earlier. I wish to freely confess my share of responsibility for the strange omission.

The Pharmacopœia should no longer be a side issue of some other Section.

CHOCOLATE CHACHETS.

FRANKLIN M. APPLE, PH. G.

Every pharmacist who has a clientèle of prescribing physicians, undoubtedly has been called upon at times to devise ways and means whereby the physician could administer medicaments in a diplomatic manner, so as to overcome the objections of the patient to the older forms of medication, and at the same time give to the patient the full dose of remedial agents indicated. This trouble is usually encountered in children, who are petted by their parents, making it necessary for the physician to resort to unsuspected forms of medication.

A modern motto reads as follows: "A diplomat is one who conceals a lump of sugar in each lemon he hands out," but in the form of medication to be de-