

As stated in the beginning of this paper, I will undertake to portray, at some future time, the history of pharmacy, in New York State, as far as this is interwoven with legally established Public Health Laws, the first of which I believe was enacted in 1871, provided the work is not undertaken by another. In closing permit me to thank the Chairman of the Committee for the opportunity provided me to bring these facts before the Historical Section and also the audience for its patience in listening to a subject at best not calculated to stimulate attention.

THE PHARMACIST IN RECENT AMERICAN FICTION.*

BY ADELAIDE RUDOLPH.

It certainly must be of significance to the later history of pharmacy, if not to the present, that fiction writers are beginning to introduce pharmacists into their stories as important or chief characters. And it is of significance, too, that the pharmacist, when thus introduced, is pretty well divested of his conventional, or stock-figure attributes, which included such surroundings as "simples," queer-looking containers, dried alligators suspended from the ceiling, love philters, and musty odors. He has now become, in the hands of the American story-writer, a normal man possessed of the common faults and virtues of his neighbors, and is surrounded by no mystery whatever.

This we can see clearly enough if we take a look into the four principal works of fiction which have, during the last three years, contained pharmacists as characters. Perhaps we must make an exception in the case of one story, in which the author seems to think it necessary possibly for decorative purposes, to give his German apothecary character a whimsical nickname reminiscent of the older treatment of the subject. I refer to Christopher Morley's story, "Rhubarb," which is to be found in a collection which this journalist and popular author of "Parnassus on Wheels," published under the title of "Shandygaff" (1918). The apothecary was called Rhubarb from his red beard. His real name was Schulz, Friedrich Wilhelm Maximilian Schulz. He is described as having received a good education in the schools of Germany before coming to this country and as well read in both German and English literature. The story-writer thus delightfully and sympathetically draws his picture:

"I wish I could set him down in his rich human flavour. The first impression he gave was one of cleanness and good humor. He was always in shirt sleeves, with suspenders forming an X across his broad back, his shirt was fresh laundered, his glowing beard served as a cravat. He had a slow, rather ponderous speech, with deep gurgling gutturals, a decrescendo laugh slipping farther and farther down into his larynx. Once when we got to know each other fairly well, I ventured some harmless jest about Barbarossa. He chuckled; then his face grew grave. 'I wish Minna [his wife, who is represented in the story as a frail, little woman, always with a shawl around her shoulders] could have the beard. Her chest is not strong. It would be a fine breast-protector for her. But me, because I am strong like a horse, I have it all!' He thumped his chest ruefully with his broad, thick hand." * * *

* Read before Section on Historical Pharmacy, A. Ph. A., New Orleans meeting, 1921.

"Despite his thirty years in America, good Schulz was still the Deutsche Apotheker and not at all an American druggist. He had installed a soda fountain as a concession, but it puzzled him sorely, and if he was asked for anything more complex than chocolate cream soda he would shake his head solemnly and say: 'That I have not got.'" * * *

"At the end of September he shut up the soda fountain gladly, piling it high with bars of castile soap or cartons of cod-liver oil. Then Minna entered into her glory as the dispenser of hot chocolate, which seethed and sang in a tall silvery tank with a blue gas-burner underneath." * * *

"We fought out the battle of the Marne pretty completely on the perfume counter. 'Warte doch!' he would cry. 'Just wait! You will see! All the world is against her, but Germany will win!'

"Poor Minna was always afraid her husband and I would quarrel. She knew well how opposite our sympathies were; she could not understand that our arguments were wholly lacking in personal animus." * * *

"How dear is the plain, unvarnished human being when one sees him in a true light! Schulz's honest, kindly face seemed to me to typify all that I knew of the finer qualities of the German, the frugal simplicity, the tenderness, the proud, stiff rectitude. He and I felt for each other, I think, something of the humorous friendliness of the men in the opposing trenches. Chance had cast us on different sides of the matter. But when I felt tempted to see red, to condemn the Germans *en masse*, to chant litanies of hate, I used to go down to the drugstore for tobacco or a mug of chocolate. Rhubarb and I would argue it out."

After an absence of the story-writer for several weeks from town and after the report had come that the Canadians had taken a mile of trenches five hundred yards deep, he again visits the old Long Island drugstore at Kings:

"Well,' I said, 'what do you think now about the war?'" * * * At last he turned around. His broad, naïve face was quivering like blanc-mange.

"What do I care who wins?" he said, 'What does it matter to me any more? Minna is dead. She died two weeks ago of pneumonia.'"

Another collection of short stories, published in 1918, "Home Fires in France" by Dorothy Canfield (Mrs. John Fisher), has an American druggist as chief character in the story entitled "A Fair Exchange." This druggist certainly has nothing about him reminiscent of the old conventional literary type. He stands forth boldly and breezily modern, and announces himself to the Government Offices in Paris as Randolph Metcalf Hale, President of the Illinois Association of Druggists, on business connected with closer commercial relations of France and the United States, his specialty, the American toilet preparations business. "It occurred to me out there in Evanston," he said, "that perhaps getting American business along my line joined up closer with French business would be as good a turn as I could do for France. After all, though it does give one the horrors to see the poor boys with their legs and arms shot off, that doesn't last but one generation. But business now—all the future is there!"

Space forbids our following in any detail the author's delightful account of Mr. Randolph Metcalf Hale's encounters and accomplishments in France. What we are concerned with most is that she introduces a druggist as a typical business man and one worthy to represent the big business enterprises for which the United

States is noted. She speaks in no apologetic tone of business either, as American writers have been wont to do, but, rather, glorifies it. The panegyric on "big business" which she puts into the mouth of her chief character seems worthy in a way to be put alongside many of the most eloquent and convincing flights of oratory recorded in history:

"You don't seem to realize what business is, modern business," Metcalf Hale says to the old French *pharmacien*, who cannot be persuaded to enlarge his commercial activities to the detriment of his enjoyment of domestic pleasures, his books, and his flower garden. "It's not just soulless materialistic money-making, it's the great, big, wide road that leads human beings to progress! It's what lets humanity get a chance to satisfy its wants, and get more wants, and satisfy them and get more, and conquer the world from pole to pole. It's what gives men, grown men with big muscles, obstacles of their size to get through. It gives them problems that take all their strength and brain power to solve, that keep them fit and pink and tiptoe with ambition and zip, and prevents them from lying down and giving up when they see a hard proposition coming their way, such as changing a small factory into a big one and keeping the product up to standard. Business, modern business keeps a man *alive* so that when he sees a problem like that he doesn't give a groan and go and prune his roses, he just tears right in and does it."

It is a matter of considerable interest that "Main Street," by Sinclair Lewis, the prize story of 1920, contains a well-drawn druggist character. His name is Dave Dyer. His social status and importance may be gauged by the fact that he is invited with the other best respected citizens to all the social functions in which a small town finds recreation.—"Do I get some more veal loaf?" merrily shrieks Dave Dyer, at the Episcopal Church lawn-festival, which never allowed any but the *élite* of the town to sit down in neighborly communion about its tables.

We know from another source that his social position is well assured for we hear the heroine in critical mood mentioning him in the same category with holders of the biggest mercantile and milling interests in the town:

"If all the provincials were as kindly," she says, "as Champ Perry and Sam Clark, lesser lights in the mercantile groups, there would be no reason for desiring the town to seek great traditions. It is the Harry Haydocks, the Dave Dyers, the Jackson Elders, small busy men crushingly powerful in their common purpose viewing themselves as men of the world but keeping themselves men of the cash-register and comic film, who make the town a sterile oligarchy."

His wife, called familiarly by her equals, Maud Dyer, though once denominated by Dr. Kennicutt, in fretful mood, as a "messy-minded female," maintained the dignity, together with the doctor's wife and the other brightest feminine lights of the town, of belonging to both of its exclusive clubs, literary and social, "The Thanatopsis" and "The Jolly Seventeen."

One of the 1920 American novels, listed during the holidays among the "six best sellers," "A Poor Wise Man," by Mrs. Mary Roberts Rinehart, exhibits a pharmacist's clerk, Willy Cameron by name, as a real, *bona-fide* hero. He performs wonderful feats, and finally wins, in truly heroic style, the hand of the daughter of the town's richest potentate in marriage.

He was a poor boy of a country town, who, because of slight physical disability, could get no farther towards the firing line than the medical department of one of the camps maintained during the war in the United States. There he became interesting to and interested in a girl doing war work, who belonged to one of the most exclusive families of a great city, where he later found employment in a drug store. His philosophizings in the back room of the drug store to a small number of admirers, gathering around him of an evening, soon brought results. Thus, he becomes a political force in the city, helping to overthrow municipal corruption and anarchistic terrorism, to elect a decent mayor, organize good government, and infuse a better spirit into business relationships. Also, in truly knight-errant style, he defends the honor of women—saves a wrong-headed young woman of the typical shop-girl class from utter disgrace and ruin, soothes the dying hours of her helpless and always inefficient mother with the assurance that the family honor is still unstained, and rescues a cantankerous girl of the would-be-idle rich class from the full effects of her own egregious foolishness. In the end, as we noted, he is rewarded with the hand of the aforesaid cantankerous daughter, "Who had been taught to think, but not how to think." Also, he is taken from the Eagle Pharmacy, where "a strange young man" is put in charge who "does not smoke a pipe, and allows no visitors in the back room," and is given a position in the chemical laboratory of his father-in-law's mills, where we leave him "dealing in tons instead of grains and drams, and learning to touch any piece of metal in the mill with a moistened forefinger before he sits down upon it."

We may feel disappointed because, apparently, to the story-writer a position in a chemical laboratory seemed a reward of greater distinction and honor than some promotion in pharmacy; but story-writers, who aim to represent things true to life, merely voice the general public opinion regarding people and their belongings. We ourselves know that pharmacy as well as chemistry does afford opportunities, to him who knows how to take them, for opening up new fields of investigation and usefulness to mankind and for building roads to grateful recognition and honor. For proof we have only to recall what Professor J. U. Lloyd has done in a distinctively pharmaceutical laboratory. But, as I intimated before, story-writers let us see ourselves as *others* see us. So—this view of Mrs. Rinehart's, expressed in her distribution of rewards, gives us much to think about.

We may, then, turn to Mrs. Fisher's tale and congratulate ourselves that she has regarded the pharmacist worthy to be a representative man of affairs; but, to be honest with ourselves, hers is wholly an exceptional view, because pharmacy was held in unusually high esteem in the Kansas university town where "Dorothy Canfield" was born, inasmuch as it was represented by B. W. Woodward, who was truly a leading citizen, in social prestige, in hospitality, and in the cultivation of taste for the best in literature and in the arts and sciences for which the people of the town and university were notably zealous. This fact gives us much to think about also.

"Main Street," that consummate estimate of the general level on which American folk now live their lives—not including their love affairs, which I should say Sinclair Lewis has set down quite off the mark—makes baldly clear that the druggist wears no halo in the public estimation, as does the country doctor. In fact, the nearest approach he makes to a halo is in the dubious honor of contributing a

few of the brightest rays to the doctor's halo, when, in utter irresponsibility and disregard for consequence, he sends ether instead of chloroform for an anesthetic to the doctor in a far-off farmhouse, where he must operate on a severely injured man by the light of an oil lamp, held now on this side and now on that of the man's head.

The public has, evidently, never yet been deeply impressed with the pharmacist's profession as an opening to the development of the finest things in human nature—unselfishness, self-sacrifice, and responsibility, at whatever cost, for the welfare of others.

Comes to mind something told to me, when I was gathering material for the Rice memorial volume, by that fine old New York Scotch pharmacist, Ewen McIntyre, who impressed me as himself the soul of integrity:

Such was Dr. Charles Rice's devotion to duty and his feeling of responsibility towards the helpless poor and afflicted in the city's hospitals that he never would forsake his work at Bellevue for any position offered him, though it promised much more honor and pay. "So, while Dr. Rice lived," said Mr. McIntyre, "the rich and fashionable dwellers in my neighborhood could buy no purer or carefully prepared medicines from my store than did the poor patients under the city's charge receive from the laboratory of Dr. Rice."

What is the matter, then?

We are certainly glad to see that the pharmacist, as a normal human being, is becoming interesting to fiction writers; but still—they give us much to think about!

A LAWYER ON DOCTORS.

A Chicago lawyer—an attorney for an alleged typhoid carrier for whom he sought release from the custody of the Health Commissioner of Chicago—recently addressed the "American Liberty League." Among the remarks accredited to him by the press are the following: "In making medical laws the doctor has shown the same 'disinterested' attitude toward the public as the burglar might be expected to show in making laws to suit his 'profession.'" If the individual is a menace to public health and her release to come and go as she pleases will mean sickness to many and death to some, then it does not seem selfish to recommend her isolation until it is safe to release her; if her freedom would not be a menace to the health of others, her detention might indict the judgment of the Health Commissioner, but not the disinterestedness of physicians, for the prevention of disease, looking at the matter from a commercial viewpoint, restricts by that much the physicians' means of livelihood.

LAW OFFICERS AND LAW BREAKERS.

It may be true that public conscience needs to be toned up; the reason, to some extent responsible for the condition, is the multiplicity of laws. There are so many laws that some are willing to take a chance in violating those which will yield big profits. When it costs more to violate a law than returns warrant most lawbreakers will become law-abiding citizens. A vital matter of the supremacy of law is the support of it by citizens. Some officials are more concerned about holding what they have than the enforcement of law; so far as official conduct is concerned unpatriotic sentiment and "profiteering" sentiment ought to be absent in the administration of law. "The one thing worse than loss of confidence in official integrity is official conduct that justifies it." This has no reference to any particular law but is a general statement as indicated by the opening lines of this comment.