

## THE VALUE OF THE RECIPE BOOK TO THE PHARMACIST.\*

BY J. LEON LASCOFF.

At last the pharmacist is in possession of the latest editions of the U. S. P., N. F. and also the Dispensatory. I am happy to report that he will soon be in possession of a new book, the so-called A. PH. A. Recipe Book or R. B. There is no question in my mind but that this book will be of great value to the pharmacist. It is going to be a companion in the daily routine of his work. While there are to-day quite a number of formula books published, this book, in my opinion, is entirely different from all the others.

It's true that it took a long time to compile these formulas and while I am not here to criticise some of the former members of the committee who did not take an active part in the work, nor to criticise the fact that previously very little appropriation was made to edit the book, the fact remains that this book has been turned over by the editor to the Publication Committee and I am sure that it will go into print very shortly.<sup>1</sup>

In May 1920 I had the honor to be elected Chairman of the A. PH. A. Recipe Book Committee. In 1923 at the Buffalo meeting I turned over to the Association the book containing 1500 formulas. At that meeting Prof. Griffith was elected the Editor. The compiling of formulas and experimentation for this Recipe Book was done voluntarily and with very little expense to the Association.

The Recipe Book will be divided into eleven parts as follows:

Part 1—Pharmaceutical Formulas.

Part 2—Hospital Formulas.

Part 3—Dental Formulas.

Part 4—Laboratory Reagents.

Part 5—Cosmetic Formulas.

Part 6—Household Formulas, Flavors, Extracts, Polishes, etc.

Part 7—Veterinary Formulas.

Part 8—Technical Formulas.

Part 9—Photographic Formulas.

Part 10—Beverage and Soda Fountain Supplies.

Part 11—Miscellaneous.

It will be mostly a pharmaceutical book and by all means practical. The Committee selected all formulas which it thought would be of great help to the pharmacists. Now let us consider its commercial value.—The numbers following titles indicate the number of items.

## PHARMACEUTICAL FORMULAS (PART I)—777.

Often a pharmacist is given prescriptions calling for formulas of the British, German, Hungarian, French, Swedish, Italian, etc., pharmacopœias. Not every pharmacist is in possession of all these books, consequently he may refuse a prescription on account of not having the proper reference books. In the Recipe Book, however, he will find a good many formulas of the above-mentioned pharmacopœias in common practice. He also may come across a prescription calling for preparations from the old edition U. S. P. and N. F. Most of the pharmacists discard these books, therefore this Recipe Book will come in very handy as some of the most important formulas which are frequently prescribed will be

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<sup>1</sup> Now in preparation.

found there. Also in the Formula Book will appear the deletions of all galenicals from both the U. S. P. and N. F. How many times do I have calls for the ingredients of Rhubarb and Soda of 1880? In this book such formulas will be found.

The pharmaceutical formulas which will appear in the book are for ampuls, balms, lotions, liniments, mixtures, solutions, etc. All these will be a great help to the pharmacist in the conduct of his prescription department. Consequently this book will be of great commercial value to him, inasmuch as he will not have to refuse any prescriptions and therefore this will greatly increase his income.

It's needless for me to add that there are some men who will not take any interest in this book for the reason that they think the two Official Standards and the Dispensatory are amply sufficient to conduct their prescription departments. This also applies to another type of pharmacist who may buy the U. S. P. and N. F., but never use them because they can buy the official preparations cheaper than they can make them themselves. Not long ago a certain proprietor of a drug store died and when I was called upon by the widow to examine his stock in order to dispose of the store, I was astonished to find the U. S. P. IX and the N. F. III untouched in the original package the way they were forwarded to him by mail. In other words, he had had the books for about ten years without ever glancing at them. He did not violate the law. According to our New York State Law the pharmacist must swear that he has in his possession the two Official Standards. He did have the books and hence did not perjure himself. The R. B. does not apply to the pharmacist of that type. It is of no value to him either way, that is from a commercial or even scientific viewpoint.

In the *New York Times* of August 22, 1926, a full-page article appeared under the title of "Bootleg Drug Stores Checked by Dry Drive." I am not going into the details of this article as we all are acquainted with conditions as they exist, not only in New York State but all over the country. However, I shall quote one paragraph, as follows:

"For a long time prohibition agents as well as laymen knew that a bootleg trade among druggists was going on, that the real drug trade was being neglected for the more lucrative liquor trade, and that pharmacy as a profession was becoming very popular. Many druggists who barely made a living before prohibition, became exceedingly prosperous, and stories were told of men financing young pharmacy graduates on a partnership basis because of the money that could be made on bootleg liquor."

This remark in the paper in regard to the financing of young pharmacy graduates on a partnership basis, because of the money to be made in bootleg liquor, is, in my opinion, a disgrace to the whole profession of pharmacy. We must find something more attractive for the young men who are graduate pharmacists than the liquor trade—a reason for the existence of some drug stores. There should be better opportunities for legitimate pharmacists to practice their profession. The condition of pharmacy to-day in competition with the cut-rate stores and the perfumery shops is certainly no attraction for the young man to branch out in business. The young man who is going to start in business and conduct a real pharmacy, and thus build up a good name and reputation, will always make a success. It will simply be a case of the survival of the fittest. Therefore, the possession of all textbooks will be of benefit to this type of man. Make your own

preparations; do not buy them even if they do cost but a few cents more. Be ready to supply the physicians' demands. Do your own propaganda work among them and good results will be achieved. That's as far as the pharmaceutical formulas are concerned.

#### HOSPITAL FORMULAS (PART II)—375.

Occasionally pharmacists encounter prescriptions calling for certain hospital formulas. They are placed in a very difficult position because they cannot possibly be in possession of all the hospital formula books. (Each hospital has a so-called pharmacopœia of its own.) In trying to communicate with the hospital, the pharmacist either refers to the chief physician or the superintendent, who is sometimes unaccommodating and not always desirous of giving any helpful information.

The value of this Recipe Book is to supply the pharmacist with formulas from different hospitals which will be alphabetically arranged. This will avoid unnecessary trouble and of course it will be a great service to the pharmacist as well as to the patient. For example, A B C mixture which contains potassium acetate, potassium bitartrate and potassium citrate is different in strength and ingredients from other formulas of A B C mixture of a different hospital. Someone may ask of what value are New York Hospital formulas to a pharmacist from California or Pennsylvania. In this book we have not only formulas from hospitals in New York State, but also prominent hospitals in other States.

#### DENTAL FORMULAS (PART III)—34.

How much profit do pharmacists derive from different dental preparations which are in the market to-day that are advertised and sold in the cut-rate stores and department stores? By making up dental preparations they will certainly derive more profit. Besides customers will be brought to the store because they will not be able to obtain the same dentifrice everywhere. The value of this Recipe Book from a commercial standpoint is that it contains quite a number of dental formulas from which the pharmacist can select the one which will fit his needs the best. Some skeptical pharmacists may, however, claim that they can buy a tooth paste or tooth powder or dentifrices from some manufacturer under their names and which will bring the same revenue. This may be true but it makes a difference whether the label reads "prepared for" or "prepared by." There is always time to be found by the employees to put up such preparations as well as by the officials of the U. S. P. and N. F.

Another point to be taken into consideration is that the pharmacist can give these dental formulas to the neighboring dentists and ask them to prescribe and recommend them to their patients. Dentists will do this in preference to advising the use of some of which they do not know the composition.

In a recent statement a manager of a department store is quoted as saying: "A certain proprietary costs 57 cents and sells for 54 cents. Our own preparation costs us 32 cents and sells for the same price." There is a gross loss of three cents on every bottle on the proprietary which is largely augmented when the selling and overhead costs are reckoned with.

## LABORATORY REAGENTS (PART IV)—66.

It is true that very few pharmacists are doing laboratory work. They may say that it is of no use to them to have different formulas of laboratory reagents and consequently they are not at all interested in them. But the pharmacist frequently has calls for these reagents by the physician and very often by patients. Fehling's Solution, Purdy's Solution, Benedict's Solution are sold quite frequently in many pharmacies. If a certain reagent is called for by a physician to be prepared for his laboratory use, how convenient it would be for the pharmacist to consult the Recipe Book and find the desired formula. This will raise the standard of the pharmacist in the eyes of the physician and again will bring him additional revenue. Besides, it will make a regular customer of the physician, not only for his laboratory reagents but for his biologicals and other physicians' supplies.

## FORMULAS FOR COSMETICS (PART V)—184.

Cosmetic formulas are of great value to the pharmacist. These preparations are sold in every drug store and pharmacy. They are also sold in the cut-rate stores, department stores and in the so-called perfumery shops. The latter are spreading over the United States; they try to imitate the drug store and are great competitors and a menace to the pharmacist. The value of this Recipe Book is that it gives quite a number of cosmetic formulas which pharmacists can put up under their own names. These cannot be obtained everywhere and certainly not at the perfumery shops.

In 1892, I was employed in a pharmacy where I worked with a gentleman well known to-day who always put up cold creams, face powders, etc. He prepared these according to the formulas published in the pharmaceutical journals. To-day his cosmetic preparations are known all over the United States and his establishment is considered one of the largest of that type.

## HOUSEHOLD FORMULAS, FLAVORS, ETC. (PART VI)—45.

Frequently the pharmacist has a call for a certain household remedy, flavor or extract. From the experience of an old-time pharmacist, this demand often comes in the daily routine of business. In order to meet this demand the pharmacist must be in possession of a book similar to the R. B. By consulting this book he will find the necessary formula, will receive additional revenue and will secure the reputation in the neighborhood of being able to supply all the needs of his customers along these lines.

## VETERINARY FORMULAS (PART VII)—28.

While the use of veterinary formulas may not apply to the pharmacist of a large city, certainly in the small town where the drug store is located near the farms, or even in the large cities where there is a call for veterinary formulas, this book will come in very handy. When a person has a pet animal that has become ill and the pharmacist can come to the rescue in an emergency case, he will secure an invaluable friend and customer. This means additional profits.

## TECHNICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC FORMULAS (PARTS VIII AND IX)—114.

I mention in connection with these formulas for developing, etc., Mr. Becker of Chicago to whom a great deal of credit should be given for supplying them.

It is needless to say that a great many pharmacists are interested in this work. They are doing some developing and a number of formulas presented by Mr. Becker will be of great value to such pharmacists.

#### BEVERAGE AND SODA FOUNTAIN SUPPLIES (PART X).

The public has been trained to buy its refreshments and beverages at the soda fountain of a drug store in preference to a candy store. To my sorrow, many pharmacists, it seems to me, have turned over their old noble pharmacies to a candy, soda water and luncheonette counter which of course brings in considerable revenue. In order to get the patronage of the public, the pharmacists' syrups and extracts must be of the best, as customers are very discriminating and go where they will get the most wholesome and refreshing drink. Of course, besides cleanliness and proper service at the fountain, the drink itself is what brings the customer back. Therefore, the value of this Recipe Book or A. PH. A. Formula Book is to supply the pharmacist with formulas for syrups and drinks.

#### MISCELLANEOUS (PART XI).

Under this head there will be found a number of formulas which will be of value to every pharmacist.

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### THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE VARIOUS SYSTEMS OF WEIGHT IN ENGLISH PHARMACY.\*

BY WILLIAM J. HUSA.\*\*

The statement has been made<sup>1</sup> that the avoirdupois or Imperial weight is used in England in prescription compounding. In the interest of accuracy in my own teaching, I have secured further information on this point from several sources, all of which indicates that the statement as it stands is incorrect. As this information may be of some interest to others in the field of pharmaceutical education, I am presenting it at this time, together with some remarks on the present status of the metric system in English pharmacy.

It is not to be denied that there has been some confusion in Great Britain on the question of what weights to use in dispensing prescriptions (1). There is evidence of this uncertainty in the preface of the 1914 British Pharmacopœia (2) which contains the statement that in prescriptions, the symbol ℥j is used sometimes to represent 480 grains, sometimes 437.5 grains, and also to represent 1 fluidounce. The real meaning of this symbol was thrashed out in the English courts in 1924 (1,3). A South London public analyst gave it as his opinion that the symbol ℥j in a prescription meant 437.5 grains and that ℥iv meant half of that. Charges of inaccuracy in dispensing were brought against five pharmacists, based on this supposition of the analyst. The Retail Pharmacists' Union and the Chemists' Defence Association went to much trouble and expense to prove that the apothecaries' ounce of 480 grains is the one by which dispensing is done. Sir

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<sup>1</sup> See Sturmer, "Pharmaceutical and Chemical Arithmetic," 3rd edition, pp. 32 and 34; 4th edition, pp. 32 and 34.