

think I should take the time to go into this phase of the subject in detail. Gentlemen of your business experience are well able to devise means for accomplishing the desired result without elementary instructions. You have all taken post-graduate courses. My aim is to bring to your attention the vital necessity of close and pleasant relations with those who hand our goods over the counter to the public for whose business we advertise, and to insure so far as is possible that this transaction is accompanied by a standard and adequate profit.

I want to urge upon you as strongly as possible the great importance of making a personal and business friend of the retail druggist. Go to him with legitimate preparations advertised on clean lines, convince him that you have his interest in mind as well as your own, and your enemies will find it difficult to induce him to join in unfair attacks on your business.

BUYING CHEMICALS FROM PEDDLERS.

OTTO RAUBENHEIMER, PH. G., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

The writer well remembers that some years ago, when refined deodorized wood alcohol was first placed on the market under a fanciful name, silver tongued salesmen were trying to convince the pharmacists throughout the country that this product was non-poisonous, and was in every way equivalent to grain or ethyl alcohol, and could be used in its place. As the result of this, many druggists throughout the United States were induced to use this product on account of its cheapness, and as a consequence some druggists had to pay fines, or even go to jail.

Practically the same conditions have existed, and do still exist ever since the new chemicals, the so-called coal tar derivatives, have been introduced into the United States. The large chemical industries especially those of Germany, have spent thousands, nay millions of dollars to perfect and to introduce these products, and for that reason, are charging a fair, and in some cases, a somewhat fancy price for these new chemicals. The processes of manufacture are patented, and the names of the chemicals are trade-marked. This serves as a protection for the manufacturer. The little republic of Switzerland has a patent law, which refuses protection to chemicals and chemical processes, and the result is that most of these chemicals are duplicated or imitated in that country, and are distributed from there. The United States in particular seems to be one of the large outlets for these products. Sometime ago, the writer read the following letter from a firm in Philadelphia:

"Kindly note that we have reduced prices on Givaudan's chemicals. Perhaps, at times, you have calls from druggists who want chemicals at ruinous low prices, regardless of whether the goods are A1 or not. If so, we have some of Siegfried's chemicals on hand, which we will sell below cost. You, of course, buy these at your own risk. Any reasonable offer will not be refused if you can use same."

Just think of such a condition in medicine, intended for the cure and relief of the sick! These imitation goods are distributed by peddlers, who deliver their

fraudulent wares to druggists from hand satchels. These peddlers are irresponsible men, who very frequently make only one visit, who have no address, who leave no bills, and who cannot be held, nor can they be caught. These peddlers are in the same class as "gunmen," many of them being ex-convicts, who would resort to any means in order to obtain money. These peddlers are also the distributors of obscene rubber goods and instruments, the sale of which is forbidden by law. They also supply cocaine and morphine to habitues, and even to school children. These peddlers buy and sell stolen goods and act as fences.

It is a large, a very large traffic that these illegitimate chemicals constitute. They are bought and sold without any guarantee whatsoever. The average druggists buy these chemicals at a slightly lower cost than the genuine articles. They dispense them, and thereby violate the patent as well as the trade mark rights of the manufacturer. That the manufacturer has such a right has been demonstrated on numerous occasions, when druggists have been caught substituting these chemicals in place of the genuine ones, and thereby have had a great deal of legal annoyance, and even have had to pay fines or were sentenced to jail.

But the druggists are not the only guilty parties, as the peddler furthermore is in the habit of supplying the dispensing physician with these articles. The dispensing physician has no means of convincing himself of the chemical identity of these products, much less than the druggist, and thereby runs a greater risk as to the health and welfare of his patients. All he knows is that the goods bear a certain label; that the goods are cheap, and this is the sole reason that prompts him to buy them.

The infringers sell these imitations under their chemicals names, and the peddler claims that they are identical with the patented and trade-marked product, but frequently, almost invariably, these chemicals are grossly adulterated. Aristol has been adulterated with brick dust, Protargol substitutes contained only 3 to 4 percent of silver, instead of 8.3 percent, and were strongly alkaline; Salicylic acid has been sold as Aspirin, and a mixture of magnesium and sodium sulphates as Pyramidon. Adulteration has even gone so far as to imitate the labels of the genuine product, so as to require an expert to tell the difference in the outside appearance between the imitation and the genuine. It is also well known that chemicals supplied by the irresponsible peddler, are generally short weight. It has been repeatedly shown that tablets which are sold by peddlers are fraudulent. Aspirin and Veronal tablets said to contain five grains, have been found to consist entirely of inert matter. A large quantity of tablets are sold by peddlers which are made from adulterated chemicals, and it is predicted that some time or other, there will be a large exposé, which will be a serious blow to pharmacy and medicine.

It has even come to my knowledge that vials, bearing imitation labels of Salvarsan, instead of containing this wonderful remedy were filled with oxide of iron to give it the characteristic color of the genuine article, and this fraud was not discovered until the peddler selling this counterfeit article had left town to continue his criminal activities in another community.

The dangerous practice indulged in by so many druggists, as well as dispensing physicians all over the United States, of purchasing supplies from peddlers,

is one of the most serious menaces to the health and life of every community. How dangerous this practice is has been well demonstrated in a recent case, when a substitute for a chemical which was intended as an eye lotion resulted in the loss of the patient's eye, and in the recovery of heavy damages from the substituting druggist.

Just now I received a circular from A. C. Smith, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, one of the veteran dealers in this class of goods which circular in fact prompted me to write this article. I would ask you to read carefully the following sentence taken from it:

"You are taking an awful chance by buying elsewhere; it is a crime to buy rank imitations and short weight tablets peddled by every Tom, Dick and Harry, whose sole desire is to get all the profit possible irrespective of quality. You owe it to yourself and customers to buy these chemicals only from a reliable source. I positively cannot recommend anyone to you. I am retiring from business with a clean slate—honorably. No man will ever find me ungrateful or dishonorable."

Could there be better proof than these statements, made by a man who knows the truth of the nefarious dealings of these peddlers? How humiliating for us druggists that we must allow ourselves to be advised by that man not to take any chances in buying goods from his competitors!

Retail druggists as well as physicians should take pride in their honorable calling, and in their profession, and should not buy their supplies from irresponsible parties. This, in my opinion, is the curse of the retail trade of today, and the sooner this will be abolished, the better it will be for professional pharmacy.

We pride ourselves on our high state of civilization, but I doubt whether conditions in this particular are anywhere as bad as in the United States; not in the darkest part of Mexico would it be possible for peddlers to sell medicines and no druggist could be found who would stoop as low as to buy supplies from notorious criminals.

It has been rumored that Mayor-elect Mitchell will appoint Dr. H. W. Wiley, Commissioner of Health of the City of New York. Let us hope that this will be done and that Dr. Wiley will begin his activities by putting an end to these criminal practices in New York City which would have a beneficial effect all over the United States.

A STUDY OF SPIRIT OF CAMPHOR TO SHOW THE EFFECT OF ADDED WATER.

J. W. MARDEN AND VANNA ELLIOTT.

The camphor in spirit of camphor can readily be determined either by titration or, if the camphor be from the same source, by means of the polariscope, but the percentage of alcohol cannot be determined by the ordinary distillation method because of the volatility of the camphor. Upon the information that certain druggists were adding water to their spirit of camphor in order to save alcohol, a study was made with the aim of devising a method for the determina-