

The valuation of cudbear and caramel in solution are procedures well known to pharmacists.

The estimation of free lactic acid in stomach contents by using ferric chloride in hydrochloric acid to form the lactate of iron.

The estimation of hemoglobin in blood by the Gower method as modified by Sahli, using as a standard picrate of carmin in glycerine.

The determination of adrenalin in supra-renal glands, by using as a comparative standard, pyrocatechin and ferric chloride.

The sanitary examination of contaminated water supplies for the presence of lead, using a saturated solution of hydrogen sulphide.

The determination of very small amounts of strychnin in human viscera, for medico-legal purposes, using as a reagent to produce a characteristic color; sulphuric acid and sodium iodate.

The very reliable method of the Bureau of Standards for the precise determination of iron in solution by using sulphocyanic acid.

The well established method of Schreiner and Brown for the exact estimation of phosphates in soil by using magnesium mixture and ammonium molybdate.

In conclusion, I may state, that I have but only scratched the surface of the vast possibilities that remain open for research in this old, but disregarded field of analytic work. I make no claim for superiority over those of the older and well defined methods extant to-day, but I do feel, that there will be occasions when the older methods will be inadmissable, and therefore in such an event, we should have recourse to other means for an accurate determination of the substance under investigation. In view of that, a number of methods known to be of value by reason of their more general use, would be acceptable. In that direction colorimetric determinations would then fill a very important part in our daily routine.

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#### A STUDY OF THE WORK DONE BY THE COMMITTEE ON PHARMACY AND QUERIES OF THE VARIOUS STATE PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATIONS.\*

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BY FREDERIC E. NIECE, NEW YORK CITY.

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In the beginning of this study I was amazed, on investigating, to find a condition of apathy, much beyond my expectation. I was quite aware that conditions were not as they should be, for the conspicuous laxity or otherwise dis-interest in the welfare of this most important committee, as was manifested to me through the different channels I pursued, proved to be more serious in the end, than what I had any reason to anticipate at the beginning.

In this study as taken from various sources, three salient factors presented themselves to me as being the cause for this much neglected department of our state pharmaceutical associations.

First. The evident disregard by the majority of the members for this part of the annual proceedings.

Second. A seeming dis-interest towards the work or results of this particular committee.

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\* Read at the Saratoga Meeting of the N. Y. State Pharmaceutical Association, June 23-26, 1914.

Third. The poor attendance at the committee's session—if they have one—and the extreme dearth of papers.

A committee of this nature certainly has some function to perform, and by reason of this fact, has some prescribed duties to exact.

Now, if this be true, and there seems to be no reason for questioning the statement, let us determine just what are the duties of such a constituted committee. For the sake of argument, let us take our own case and turn to a copy of our proceedings and read the By-Laws, under the caption of "Appointment of Committees," Art. VII, Section 3:—

"The Committee on Pharmacy and Queries shall during the interval between its appointment and the next ensuing meeting prepare a list of queries and suggestions on scientific and commercial topics and shall at least two months before the date of said meeting send a copy of this list to each of a selected number of members and the committee shall report its endeavors at the said annual meeting."

From this we are to understand therefor, that such a committee has much laid out for it to do, and the terms of its labors are given in precise wording. But with all this, the committee becomes a nonentity by reason of the failure of the membership at large to cooperate with it.

The intent of this report is by no means a complaint, but rather a request for better work in the future, not so much by the committee itself, but by that vast number which constitutes the committee of the whole—and that is the entire membership. I have no reason for admonishing past or present committees, either directly or by inference, but I am endeavoring to awaken more interest in the welfare of this committee, than what has been manifested at previous meetings of recent years. The members comprising this committee, of each year, to my knowledge have made every effort to succeed with their work, but the weak support they have received from the members in general has been decidedly discouraging.

What is seriously needed, is some plan of activity that will create more enthusiasm and greater interest in the welfare of future committees if their appointment is going to be justified. How this may be accomplished, will perhaps depend on the manner in which the committee—from year to year—bring it to the notice of the membership. Two cardinal points suggest themselves however—which have proven successful with other associations less pretentious than our own. One way is by setting aside an entire session in the morning or evening for reading and discussing papers only. The other is the awarding of suitable prizes under certain conditions, for meritorious papers. The details of this being left within the jurisdiction of said committee. Certain rules should be set down however, so as to insure the program being carried out in order. These rules should be strictly adhered to. I find the usual complaint (and it is prevalent) of authors is by statement—"that you get no time to read a paper, and then if you do read it, there is hardly any body present to listen or discuss it." Rather a poor stimulus for our members to write papers isn't it? That every workman is worthy of some reward, goes without saying, hence no writer, ever so humble wants disappointment in the reading of his or her creation, especially after they have taken the pains and suffered the same in burning the mid-night oil in arranging their thoughts in a tangible form.

The arguments here submitted are in consequence of reliable data which I have collected from various sources. It is offered at this time, and in this manner, with the hope that this committee will be more readily recognized as a factor in our state associations, and a virtue of no small value at our stated meetings.

The prime objects of our annual meetings, as you well know, are to disseminate knowledge and good cheer. A careful examination will reveal however, that things are very much one sided, for as a matter of fact, the latter will be found to be 90% to the good, while a bare 10% can be figured out to the credit of the former.

The annual gathering is the one occasion of the year that we all look forward to for recreation and freedom of all commercial cares and scientific pursuit.

To meet with it, means the coming in contact with those elements conducive to a more congenial sphere by reason of new scenes, strange faces and happier environments. This is the one thing uppermost in our minds, and well it is reasoned, but where will one find a more opportune time for education and elevation, than at a meeting of this kind, where many minds from as many different places congregate to delineate upon the topics of the day. On all occasions there is a time and place for everything, but so sad to state, the fate of this committee of late, has been such, that it has had no place to lay its weary head, much less to even speak its own name.

How true this is, may be better understood, by the reading of the minutes of our various state associations, when an amazing condition of affairs will present themselves.

You will observe that there is no attempt to over-burden the attendants with an abundance of knowledge, good, bad or indifferent as the case may be, and yet the purport is in that direction; while there is no lack of other things. Now let us see if this is a fact, or only idle conjecture. The following list of questions was submitted to the secretaries of all the state pharmaceutical associations throughout the United States. The following replies taken at random and placed in their numerical position as to membership furnished this interesting information:

	Membership 1913	Members present last meeting	Papers presented	Special ses- sion for read- ing papers	Percent of pa- pers to mem- bers present	Percent of pa- pers to entire membership.
Pennsylvania	1415	96	38	yes	40	2.6
New York	1160	150	3	no	2	0.2
New Jersey	900	110	16	yes	15	1.7
Wisconsin	451	85	20	no	23	4.4
Tennessee	450	175	10	—	6	2.2
West Virginia	415	130	3	no	2.5	0.7
Virginia	410	105	3	yes	3	2.0
Alabama	400	75	4	yes	3	1.0
Washington	320	100	6	no	6	2.0

An examination of the above figures shows the following results:

Out of the nine associations selected, with a total membership of nearly 6000,

a total of 926 members in attendance is found according to the records of the last year. This gives 15% of the total. Out of this number something like 108 papers were obtained, giving a percentage of 1.8% out of the entire membership. This adds to our fund of information one paper to about every 55 members or about one paper to every nine members in attendance, or an average of 12 papers to each association recorded. The percentage of individual papers presented per association as compared to the members present at the meeting of their respective association, show a great variation. Pennsylvania is the highest; with 40%, and New York the lowest; with 2%.

It is quite evident, that these facts prove the contention, for one can see that there is a sorrowful lack of interest all along the line.

In support of the statement, that the dissemination of knowledge is one, if not the all important feature of our state meetings, I should, in passing, refer you to our national association, or that of the American Medical. It seems the only matter of importance that comes before these bodies other than that of legislation, is that of education, be it scientific or commercial. So I say, our various pharmaceutical associations should be adjudged in neglect. This much talked of "Professional Pharmacy" can be no better fostered than by reason of the production of a fair quantity, and a good quality of original material for reading and discussion. In view of this, and it should not be difficult, the annual meetings could not avoid becoming of interest to every one and thereby truly scientific. That scientific touch, that so many of us desire that our meetings should possess, will no longer obtain, unless we show a greater interest in the welfare of this particular committee, for by no other channel can it become possible other than this one; at least not so readily.

If we are to expect a continuation of such a committee, if we are to advance the interest of our profession, if we are to gain in strength, knowledge and prestige, we must show more willingness to coöperate and assist this committee in its work. By reason of the success of this committee's work, many, if not all of us, will doubtless return home much richer in the world's knowledge of our chosen profession, than when we came.

#### AMYL NITRITE; ITS PREPARATION, PURITY AND TESTS.

FRANK O. TAYLOR, PH. C.

(Continued from September Number.)

The B. P. says: "A mixture of 5 volumes with sufficient alcohol (90%) to form 100 volumes affords a liquid of which a portion tested in a nitrometer, as described under "Spiritus Aetheris Nitrosi," should yield not less than six times its bulk of nitric oxide gas." This is equivalent to about 66 percent. by weight of pure amyl nitrite. This also is a standard easy of attainment, in fact it is decidedly too low. A sample which will meet the distillation test will more than respond to this assay.

Again, the U. S. P. imposes an assay requiring about 80% of pure amyl nitrite. This is not at all too high but of itself would readily pass a sample as of standard quality which might be far from such. If amyl nitrite has been imperfectly made from an impure alcohol, it might easily contain lower alkyl nitrites and un-