

## Section on Historical Pharmacy

Papers Presented at the Sixty-Second Annual Convention

### ADDRESS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HISTORICAL SECTION.

DR. W. C. ALPERS.

Chairman Alpers prefaced the reading of his address with the following remarks:—

Before reading my address I will state that during the last year a number of letters, papers, clippings, etc., were sent me from various sources, to be incorporated in the archives of the Association, the most important ones being the following:

Correspondence of the Council during the year 1913, sent by the Secretary of the Council, Mr. England, to General Secretary Beal.

From H. M. Whelpley the following Ebert miscellany was received:—

The license of Albert E. Ebert as a physician; the inventory of Mr. Ebert's store at the corner of Polk and State Streets, Chicago, and his appointment as a member of the Board of Pharmacy of Illinois.

From Francis B. Hayes, former editor of the Druggists Circular, was received the following historical miscellany:—

Press clippings relating to the meetings of the Association held at New York in 1907, and at Richmond in 1900 and 1910 and of the meeting of the U. S. Pharmacopœial Convention held at Washington, D. C., in 1910.

Originals of letters from distinguished pharmacists anent the life and death of Professor C. S. N. Hallberg, originally published in the Druggists Circular. Other clippings on the same subject collected from other journals.

Letter from Prof. J. M. Maisch anent the dispensing of poisons.

Formal announcement, in French, with heavy mourning border, of the death of J. L. A. Creuse.

Engraved card of Monsieur Creuse with his Brooklyn and Paris addresses added,—presumably in his own handwriting.

Photograph of Microscope, with original diagram and description, signed by Hans M. Wilder, of his "gauge for the proper polarizing angle of the block glass."

Manuscript of Hans M. Wilder entitled, "Examinations of Colors, Yarns and Fabrics for Arsenic and Tin," translated from the Rundschau.

### ADDRESS.

During the last year the remark has been made by some of our members, and also, in the correspondence of the council, that the Historical Section did not arouse any interest, and might just as well be abolished, in order to shorten or facilitate the work of the Association. I consider it proper and timely, to refute these arguments and point out that the Historical Section is not only useful but necessary for the further development and standing of the American Pharmaceutical Association.

There can be no doubt that there are some among our 3000 members—in fact it would be remarkable if there were not—who take no interest in historical matters at all, whether pharmaceutical, industrial or political, and to whom history in general is a useless science; men who only live in the present, who cannot, and will not, learn from the successes and failures of former generations; men who in the dullness of their own intellect or inflated conception of their own importance, know nothing in this world but themselves, and believe that their own narrow views are sufficient and broad enough for everybody else. We need not listen to the views of such men. If we did we would have to abolish, not only the Historical Section, but all sections; for there are others who hold these same narrow views about the Scientific Section, others about the Commercial Section, and so on. The strength of the American Pharmaceutical Association, however, lies in the fact that it has always embraced all branches of pharmacy, and has devoted equal time, labor and energy to each and every one, thus expounding, promoting and encouraging knowledge, instruction and industrial development, and its true members understand and appreciate this broad scope.

Then the claim is made, that the attendance, at the meetings of the Historical Section is generally small, on account of lack of interest. This charge of small attendance has been true, I regret to say, during the last few years; but the reason for it is not lack of interest, but rather errors of arrangement and management. The programs of the meetings of the last few years, show that the sessions of the Historical Section were put at the end of the meetings, mostly on Saturday. This was probably done without any particular intent, but simply because ours was, until recently, the youngest of all the sections. However, this arrangement necessarily curtailed its attendance, as many members leave for home on Saturday. Another cause of absence, has been the unreasonable extension and adjournment of other sections. If the business of other sections, is not finished in their allotted time, they generally adjourn to Saturday, without paying any regard to those that will meet at the same time. At the Nashville meeting three adjourned-sections met, in this way, on Saturday, that had had ample time before, but either through the leniency of their chairman, or the loquacity of some talkative members, who must be heard on every question, at every section and time, for fear the Association might go to pieces without their garrulousness, they did not finish their business and encroached on the prerogatives of the later sections. No wonder that there is a small attendance, if three adjourned-sections meet at the time allotted to this section.

The importance and necessity of a Historical Section, in an association like ours must be apparent to every thinking member. There is no other association of national character, whether scientific, commercial or political, that does not devote a good deal of its time to this work. Indeed, so important are the records of events considered, that we have numerous associations devoted solely to history; nearly every state possesses one, many counties and cities embrace it in their official work, and, besides these, there is the great National Historical Association. The truth of the word of the great historian, Ranke, that, "History is the court of the world that renders only just verdicts," has long been recognized, and neither efforts nor money are spared to read these verdicts to the people, and to let them learn and profit by them. The study of history is a safe and reliable guide in the progress of all human endeavor, no matter on what field it is employed or to what purpose it is directed.

Among the professions, pharmacy needs this guide more than any other. The aims and purposes of most professions are well defined and clearly laid out; their disciples march, like a closed phalanx, on the straight road that their leaders have pointed out. They may differ as to methods, as to time, as to means, in smaller matters. But they are united and unanimous in their fundamental

principles, and wherever obstacles appear or enemies arise, they offer a firm front and always come out victorious. Not so with pharmacy. Pharmacy is not a science by itself, like Medicine, Theology, Jurisprudence, Mathematics, and others. It is composed of parts of many sciences. It takes from botany, chemistry, medicine, microscopy, and others. It borrows from commercial pursuits and demands high skill and handicraft from its disciples. All these parts it joins together and builds a new structure from them. Such a complex organism cannot endure, unless each part is strong in itself and well balanced in its proportions and importance. No wonder that difficulties and dissensions arise, no wonder that many minds will differ as to the importance of some one part. It is thus that pharmacy easily deviates from her straight and safe course and loses herself in a maze of conflicting advice and efforts. Here History will point out the right way. We can learn from her that these controversies, these aberrations from the straight course, are the natural consequence of its complex character, that they have existed from the very beginning and will forever continue to exist. We will learn that, at every emergency, strong and faithful leaders have arisen, undisturbed by the clamor of the mass, with clear views and courage of conviction. We will learn that many times these leaders have been derided and ridiculed, but that their views finally prevailed. We will learn that pharmacy, like every other science that aspires to truth and justice, cannot succumb to outer influences of a base nature, no matter how strong they may appear. And when we turn to the lives and deeds of the noble men in our profession that shaped its course in the past, we will gain strength, to uphold the high aims of our vocation, and confidence in the final outcome.

Let us place the lives of our best men before the young, and teach them that success in life does not mean wealth alone. Let us create in them, by the examples of those whom we honor, a high conception of their duties and strong impulse to do their very best in their positions, however humble they may be. All can learn from these examples, and in the records of pharmaceutical history, that there are lessons for every member of our profession. By simply reading the proceedings of the American Pharmaceutical Association of past years, we find many instances of every type of pharmacist from the highest scientific man to the strictly commercial drug dealer, each worthy to be emulated, each aspiring to and reaching the aim that he put before himself, each accomplishing success as he understood it.

The manufacturer will find hundreds of hints serviceable to his purpose, in the employment of various methods or the use of tools and machinery; he will learn the wishes and needs of his customers, profit by suggestions and benefit by the inventive minds of former generations.

The source of wealth that lies in the study of pharmaceutical history for the scientific man, is really inexhaustible. There is no subject of the wide domain of pharmacy, that has not been approached in former years; no theory that has not been discussed; no problem, the solution of which has not been attempted. It is true, many of these papers appear crude or unfinished in the light of our present understanding, others that were once hailed as pioneers on new fields, may have turned out wrong since then—but in spite of this, there are lessons in them; they may be regarded as warning signals for the searcher of truth and show which roads to avoid, which thicket to circumvent.

The young man with literary ambition, by reading pharmaceutical history, will not precipitately rush into print, whenever a new idea or problem,—new to him and therefore as he argues to every one,—agitates his mind. He will learn that probably nine-tenths of what he supposes to be new, has been treated by others before him; but, by reading and studying these problems as they appeared to others under other conditions, he will improve his knowledge, correct his judgment and clarify his views.

The greatest gain in studying the history of pharmacy will accrue to the men who compose the bulk of our profession, the practical pharmacists. Whether they look at their vocation as a profession or business they will learn that pharmacy is not a science or occupation the conduction of which can be put down in so many rules or laws; that it is rather a continuous development, that its work and purpose are progressive and constantly changing. Rules of business and industry are always based on surrounding conditions, on the quality of customers, on international trade, on new inventions, new methods of manufacture, new uses and applications of apparatus, and many other conditions, over which neither the individual, nor the united craft, nor even a whole nation, have any influence. History shows us that all these conditions undergo a constant change, and that our rules and methods must likewise change. Stubborn adherence to certain methods, that were good and profitable in past years, is a fight against the inevitable, and neither close combination, nor boycott, nor promises, will check the onward march of such commercial evolutions. History will show us that we must pay attention to these evolutions and adapt ourselves to them. We will thus learn that the most successful men are those who with keen eyes foresaw such changes and prepared their methods, their purchases, their whole business for them. Adaptability should be the leading quality of every successful pharmacist, not stubborn conservatism or reactionary revolution. This is true for the large dealer as well as the smallest apothecary, for the strictly commercial man, as well as the professional pharmacist. And more, we learn that these various men of different type, no matter how divergent their views and aims, might have worked harmoniously together and in combination, each one working faithfully in his sphere, to erect the great structure of pharmacy.

The broad and general knowledge, that History, like a good friend and teacher, thus imparts to every disciple is, however, not the only gain that we derive from its study. We also learn that system and order are of immense importance in another direction, and are thus shown the way to new and necessary work in the interest of our profession. Many times in reading the records of past pharmaceutical history, we are disappointed about the lack of information and dearth of dates concerning some great man or important event. In some instances we do not even know the date and place of birth of some of the pharmacists, who shaped the destinies of our profession; sometimes, also, conflicting views are expressed, and it seems impossible to sift truth from supposition and error. To overcome this difficulty a historical record of every member of our profession should be kept, or if this demand is too broad,—of every member of our Association. Cards should be devised and written giving his birth, education and industrial and scientific development. Dates of membership in this Association and others should be provided, offices that he held, committees to which he belonged, reports that he wrote, addresses that he made, papers and books that he compiled, lectures that he delivered, degrees conferred upon him and other honors that he achieved. The Austrian Pharmaceutical Association entertains what they call a *Gremium*, a combination of a scientific school and business office, where they keep a record of every pharmacist in the large domain of the Austrian empire. True, there are not as many members as there are in the United States, as the number of pharmacists of that country is restricted to a fixed percentage of population. But by systematic and persistent work we, too, might have such valuable records, particularly if the state associations would also take up this work, and thereby divide it in many parts. It seems to me that the Historical Section should undertake this work for the members of the Association, and every new candidate should in future be requested to fill out a question sheet devised for this purpose. It would not take long to obtain this information from the living members, and after that the history of those deceased should be treated in the same way. Such a record, if once completed, would

not only furnish dates and names, but also serves to disclose the inner thoughts, the underlying motive power, that actuated leading men in their doings, which to discover and analyze is the highest and most difficult aim of history.

Together with such records, should go a historical museum. The first historian of this section, Dr. E. Kremers, has contributed valuable papers on the usefulness of such an institution which to repeat does not seem necessary. But as but little has been done, so far in this direction, I again urge the Association to provide some means for this most useful and necessary institution, and to create the position of a custodian, whose duty it should be to collect objects of interest, classify and arrange them and enter into correspondence with all who might be able and willing to contribute to such a collection. The importance of such a museum, and the interest evinced in it, is best shown by the zeal with which traveling pharmacists visit the Germanic Museum in Nuremberg where three different pharmacies representing the 13th, the 15th and the 17th centuries, are exhibited. The articles shown there were contributed from all parts of Germany and every German pharmacist is proud of the collection. Other similar collections may be seen in Berlin, Vienna and Berne, each representing the history of pharmacy of its country. Our country should not be backward, and defer the establishment of a pharmaceutical museum until it will be difficult, or even impossible to collect articles of interest of past years. If the proposition to erect a home for the American Pharmaceutical Association ever becomes a reality, such a house would be the proper place for the museum and historical records. But a beginning should be made now, and a custodian should be appointed, who has time, ability and inclination to perform this work and who can give it a temporary abode.

I therefore recommend that such a custodian be appointed by the council or the work of the historian be extended and sufficient funds be appropriated to carry out the work in a dignified and proper way.

Before closing my address I consider it my duty to express my sincere thanks to our Secretary, Mr. F. T. Gordon, who has filled this important office for a number of years with most praiseworthy zeal and remarkable ability. It is owing to his energy that the sessions of the Historical Section have been crowned with success in past years. I also thank our Historian and all members who have contributed in such able manner to the archives of this section and to the members of the Association in general for their faithful attendance and interest.

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#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY.

The work of the secretary for the past year has chiefly been the soliciting of contributions from members on topics of historical interest to pharmacy and the collection of historical material. The suggestion made at the Nashville Meeting, that the collection of pharmaceutical journals and daily newspapers containing reports of the meetings of this Association, has proven successful, and I have received copies of all the leading pharmaceutical journals of that period, which will be extremely valuable in future years, through the photographs and personal items concerning members and their activities. I wish to express my thanks, and that of the Association, to those editors who have so willingly complied with the request for copies of their journals. We are so accustomed to throw aside newspapers and other printed matter that we often overlook the importance it will have to future students of the history of pharmacy. There is no doubt as to the value of such material, but WHERE ARE WE GOING TO KEEP IT? If we, of the present day, really wish to add material to the building of the temple of pharmacy we must have a place to put it, and not let it be scattered in all parts