

## Editorial

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### THE FUTURE.

**T**HE question of what is to be the pharmacy and the pharmacist of the future is one most interesting, naturally, to all the members of our profession. The changes which have come within its practice within a few short years, have caused us to deeply consider the question, What is to be the outcome to Pharmacy of all this apparent radical, this ultra change in ambition and in development?

Of course it is folly to regret this change. Mutation is inevitable in all things. Everywhere there is a constant evolution or devolution in progress, from which metamorphosis must result and which we must inevitably encounter and for which we must be prepared.

It has seemed always to be the desire of man to produce something immutable. The Pharaohs, when they built their pyramids and placed within them their sarcophagi, wished to build for all time and vainly thought they could there rest until the last day. The priests of all the ancient religions, of the Temples of Vesta and Mars, of Jupiter and Saturn, the very altars of which stand unworshipped in the Forum of to-day, all thought the faith they revered was to endure till the end of time. In all things we must anticipate a change, and hold ourselves in readiness to guide that change rightly and for the good of all.

We fear to break from the established course; we do not like to be forced from our accustomed surroundings; we know the evils we have, but know not those which may come to us under new conditions, when we cut adrift and sail out over the unknown and uncharted seas.

From the days of Accad, of which we get our first mention in Genesis, the science of Pharmacy has been in constant process of evolution, and through the chiliads of years, since that time, there has been a constant, never-failing change, progression and regression, like the ever-moving waves upon the ocean's bosom; the tides upon the shingly beach.

So knowing the absolute certainty with which changes are to come, it is for us to seek,—not to retain the old conditions, the old ways and the old methods,—but to boldly and resolutely strive to make these changes such as will elevate and uplift the science and the art of which we are the disciples.

To the ordinary mind it would almost seem that Pharmacy, as we knew it, that of the olden time, had so radically changed that but slight connection existed between that and the art of Pharmacy of to-day. But these changes are but of the surface. Pharmacy is to-day as it has always been since the days of Babylon and Nineveh and the cuneiform prescriptions, the science and the art of preparing medicines for the healing of the sick. And so it will continue to be until the end of time. The "Telinon" and the "Mendesium" of the ancient Egyptians were

prepared in the same way as our ointments are prepared at the present time. And when Macaulay's traveller from New Zealand "shall in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul" then will Pharmacy be still existent, ministering to the ills and woes of Humanity.

With such a prospect before us we should simply look upon the aberrations of the pharmaceutical horologe as only most ephemeral. We are passing through what we might term the "Dark Ages" of Pharmacy; a pharmaceutical regression, from which Pharmacy will emerge purified and better. It is impossible for Pharmacy to permanently move backward. It is a science and as such it can never die. The soul, the essence of Pharmacy, is its knowledge of drugs which makes it useful to mankind. Surround it as you may with Commercialism; adulterate its pure stream as you will with baser things, yet above all, there must come a time, when these things will pass away and the pure bright light, radiating from its torch, will shine forth in undimmed radiance. This time must come, for

"Knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed;  
 Drink deep until the habits of a slave,  
 The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite,  
 And slander die. Better not be at all  
 Than not be noble."

And it is to make Pharmacy noble and great that we should dedicate ourselves.

How can we do this? By making ourselves noble and great. By adding to ourselves each day something of knowledge which will all tend to the uplift of our profession, to the making of that profession noble.

The Pharmacy of America is determined by the character of its fifty thousand pharmacists, and upon us depend the question whether it shall be noble or ignoble, base or true.

In this work the American Pharmaceutical Association must take a leading part. It should keep its face steadily toward the rising sun of progress and, putting aside all base and lowering tendencies it should uphold the dignity, the purity of Pharmacy and its aims.

"Once to every man or nation, comes the moment to decide,  
 In the strife of truth with falsehood  
 For the good or evil side."

And it is for us, at this moment to decide that Pharmacy shall be noble, shall be pure, shall be true to itself and to its traditions.

Let every one of us gird himself to this work. Let us highly resolve, each day that we as pharmacists will be better, more noble and more skilled, and we will do our part to make of Pharmacy what we all desire to see it,—not merely an end to the attainment of worldly wealth, but a means of serving humanity better, more wisely and well.

## THE UNSOLVED PROBLEMS OF CHEMISTRY.

A NUMBER of years ago Prof. Ira Remsen of the Johns Hopkins University wrote a most entertaining paper on the above subject and to-day the questions to which it called attention are as involved as they were at that time. There still remain these unsolved problems which some day we may hope to master, but which, at the present time, are as difficult and impossible for us to solve as is the *pons asinorum* to the primary student of arithmetic.

Who can tell us definitely what becomes of the sugar we dissolve in our daily cup of coffee or tea? We say it is in solution, but what is the meaning of that term? We can recover it from that solution to be sure, but in what form is it while it is in that solution. People said the apple "fell," but until Newton no one knew the universal law, which acts on the mightiest of suns and the tiniest of sands; which holds Boötes and Sirius and the Great Bear in their fixed places in the everlasting heavens.

We speak of elements, what are they? Things impossible to simplify? No, things it is impossible for us to break up, that is all. What we know is but little more than Boyle knew when he wrote his *Scyptical Chymist* in 1660 and then the four elements, earth, air, fire and water, were the last words of science on the elementary things of the world.

If the Cosmos is the result of evolution, as scientists tell us, then all the elements must have had a common origin. If all life comes through the protoplasm and the protozoa, then a common source must exist for all living organisms. But of all this we have not the faintest knowledge. The diamond and the graphite of the lead-pencil are the same element we are told. Both pure carbon. If so why do they differ? Why should the one be hard and the other soft, one translucent and one opaque, one conduct electricity slowly and the other with facility?

We think we know all about water. We know its constituents, hydrogen and oxygen, but why does it dissolve as much chloride of sodium at 32° as at 212° when it dissolves much more of other substances at the higher temperature? Why does it suddenly expand when it freezes?

To many of these and like other problems the pharmacist has an introduction and it is to the credit of the profession that some of the greatest advances in chemistry came through the humble pharmacist's apprentice. Scheele entered the drug-business at the age of thirteen and Baron Liebig began his apprenticeship in a drug-store at fifteen. And so to these unsolved problems of chemistry we invite the attention of all pharmacists. Study and thought are the essentials of all advance. Not alone the study of books, but the study of things and these things are immediately under the eye of the pharmacist. To every boy entering the drug-business to-day the opportunity is offered to solve some of these problems and mark a step in the world's advance.