

EDITORIAL

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MAJOR-GENERAL GORGAS A BENEFACTOR OF MANKIND.

THE activities of Major-General William C. Gorgas came to an end in England on our National Holiday, but the results of his achievements will continue to benefit mankind. He was on his way to Africa where further duties were awaiting this man to whom "the nations of the world appealed when threatened by deadly plague or perilous infection." Though the discoveries upon which his methods of sanitation were based were not his own, he applied them practically and on a large scale, and he would have been the last one to underestimate the work of Lazear, Finlay, Agramonte, Reed and others which made possible the success of his own.

Born in Mobile, where, in his earlier days, yellow fever claimed many victims, he lived to plan the means and methods whereby, in the words of Secretary of War Baker, "his work practically made an historic disease of what was once a virulent plague." That he should be summoned while on a mission preparatory to further service in the field wherein he was leader gives a tragic and dramatic touch to his ending, characteristic of his career; victor of a dread disease, he succumbed to another, nephritis.

America, through this distinguished sanitarian, participated in a service of the type which has honored the United States among the nations of the world and is an inspiration to its citizens. We may refer with pardonable pride to the incentive of our country in helping Cuba, and its part in the world war, as we pay tribute to a benefactor of mankind and acknowledge the inestimable value of the work of Doctor Gorgas. What he did for Cuba and the Canal Zone was service for the world, not merely through the immediate benefits and benefactions, but by proving that disease can be controlled and plagues can be checked. Coöperation is an essential factor in all worth-while achievements and, therefore, without taking away any of the credit which medicine and sanitary science are entitled to, the contributory work of their related branches share, as also the military and civil authorities, who gave support to the undertaking that made victory over malarial diseases possible.

The supreme services of Major-General Gorgas were acknowledged by the world before he passed away and, while his wish to free all inhabited portions of the world where malaria saps and destroys life was not granted, he was permitted to prepare others for continuing his work. Pasteur established the germ theory, but the investigations as to how the germs are conveyed remained for individual workers and also how to destroy the carriers; among the foremost of those who studied and put into practice the means of preventing infection is the hero of Cuba and Panama.

"The Commemoration Volume," published by the American Medical Association in 1915 as "a tribute to the memory of those workers who made the build-

ing of the canal and the significance of the Panama Exposition possible," contains a contribution by the then Surgeon-General Gorgas, which closes with the following paragraph:

"I think we are on the eve of one of the great sanitary triumphs of man, the first eradication of a disease from the face of the earth, due to the measures taken by man for this purpose. When this has once been accomplished, yellow fever can never return, no matter how unsanitary we are, or how many stegomyia we allow to breed. The yellow fever germ can no more be redeveloped than can the mastodon or the saber-toothed tiger."

E. G. E.

NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF.

SOME men think only in terms of themselves, some of States, others of still broader vision of nations, some in terms of the whole human race. The thought is applicable to pharmacists and those who supply them—with some it is solely a matter of sale and resale, while others are more deeply concerned. In the restricted view others are not considered, the welfare of the profession or business is merely incidental; those of broader vision seek to promote not only their own welfare but the advancement and progress of those similarly engaged, so that humanity may be best served. The former seek personal gain, the others a greater usefulness, and recognize their duties to their fellowmen. So it is with nations; advanced thinking, improved methods of transportation, communications, and economic conditions make self-isolation and working solely for their own interests prejudicial, if not impossible.

The foregoing editorial spoke of the world-service of a man and the spirit which actuated the United States to serve the world; a spirit, which we are pleased to term the spirit of Americanism, whereby not only big things, but good things, are accomplished. A recent editorial of the *New York Commercial* said: "We are charged with being a nation of money-makers, which is true enough, but we are not money-makers in the cold-blooded sense our critics would have the world believe. On the contrary, we are a nation of idealists, emotional and temperamental, and when aroused, inclined to go to extremes. As a nation we want to do what is right. We want to be honest and just. We may not always be able to express these desires through our political representatives, and sometimes we may stray far afield, but usually we swing back to our ideals and try for a new start."

In the hurry and rush of daily affairs and personal interest we must at times pause and reflect on the course of events in our business and profession. The present is a time when men of vision are needed, who have sufficient prescience to visualize conditions in pharmacy. Thoughtful anticipation should suggest foresighted preparation for changing conditions and development in pharmacy and in the drug business, due to legislation and our responsibilities thereunder. "Am I my brother's keeper?" can only be answered in the affirmative by nations and individuals. All of these thoughts enter into the purpose of this editorial, which is to be restricted to our obligations under the prohibition and narcotic laws.

The greater number of pharmacists would prefer to discontinue the sale of alcoholics and narcotics under all circumstances but, in our opinion, it becomes a

duty to supply them on physicians' orders. Both of these subjects were discussed in the Sections of the American Pharmaceutical Association at the recent convention in Washington. Pharmacists are generally regarded by the public to be upright and dependable, and to maintain that regard it is essential that every possible assistance be given to the enforcement of the prohibition law. Prohibition Commissioner John F. Kramer said: "It is not the province and the duty of the officials of the land alone to see that the laws are obeyed, but it is the duty and province of every American citizen, as far as possible, to see that the laws of the land are obeyed and respected." And again, he said: "It takes only a few men in any profession to bring all the members into disrepute." These are important matters; it is a duty to guard the profession, by keeping those out of it who lend themselves to bringing disrepute on themselves, and thereby on others, and when unfair, insinuating reflections are made by slanderers or by the press, to deny the charges, if untrue, or define the attitude of pharmacists toward those who "have traded an honorable name for the unworthy title of 'bootlegger.'" Applying the conclusion of an editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on the subject of "Prohibition and the Medical Profession" to pharmacy: "For the good name of *our profession* it should be made known to the public in an emphatic manner that such disreputable practices on the part of any *pharmacist* are not condoned. *Noblesse oblige.*"

Relative to the narcotic question the attitude of pharmacists is well defined; the subjects of discussions before the various Sections of the American Pharmaceutical Association related largely to importation, exportation and manufacture, and the action or non-action of the Government. The war largely interfered with the consummation of international control of narcotics. Our views relative to America and American manufacturers have been stated, that as a nation we want to do what is right. We want to be honest and just. We may stray far afield, but usually we swing back to our ideals and try for a new start. That making narcotic slaves of so populous a nation as China, or any people for that matter, constitutes a serious menace to the world is unquestionable. Aside from that, it is not honest and just; the United States will not stand for it, and the American manufacturers will be found among the foremost to aid in regulating such traffic when the governments take up this very serious problem. The war brought an upheaval and changed the viewpoints on a number of things, some temporarily, and reconstruction is needed along certain lines.

"The very first thing we should do is to renew our faith in ourselves as a people, not vaingloriously, but in the knowledge that we are capable of doing great things and that whatever tasks we set ourselves to do we can accomplish." None of us liveth to himself.

E. G. E.

THE NATIONAL FORMULARY.

The National Formulary Committee held a meeting at Longport, N. J., early in July which will be of far-reaching importance. The Association is to be congratulated on having a committee for the revision of the National Formulary which is not only able and well balanced, but is willing to work. Every member of the committee of fifteen was present, and every member put in all his time between meals in solid and steady labor. What was accomplished in the two

and a half days of personal conference is fully equal to six months of work by correspondence, and will prove to be much more satisfactory. At Longport the National Formulary had undivided and concentrated attention. Longport was chosen for the meeting because the vicinity of Philadelphia is the most central and economical place for meetings of this committee, and Longport has a better climate than Philadelphia in July, and cheaper hotels. The weather was fine.

The original purpose of the National Formulary was to make easily available standard formulas for preparations in common use by physicians, and to supply preparations as they are being used. If the Formulary had continued as an unofficial book, this policy might have continued wisely, but since the book has been recognized as an authority in pharmacal and medical practice something more than a perpetuation of formulas is needed. It is but reasonable to expect that not only shall the formulas be satisfactory for the preparations which they represent, but that the preparations themselves shall be pharmaceutically and scientifically sound. Inasmuch as the N. F. has not assumed and cannot assume authority for the therapeutic value of a preparation, it cannot revise formulas on the basis of therapeutic efficiency; but, on the other hand, it cannot ignore therapeutic incompatibility. The prescription pharmacist is not expected to be a therapist but he is expected to be able to detect and prevent the administration of dangerous doses, or of incompatibilities that are dangerous. So the National Formulary, while it cannot endorse or assume responsibility for therapeutic values, yet it cannot entirely ignore therapeutics.

In this connection we may call attention to the fact that the N. F. contains a number of preparations which, while they contain medicinal agents of mild form, are yet essentially vehicles. The former Compound Digestive Elixir, over which there has been so much controversy, is of this type. It has some digestive power, but its main use is as a vehicle. Therefore, the important factor in this preparation is its aesthetic quality, not its therapeutic action. It must be attractive in taste and appearance. Its digestive power is quite secondary, though it too must be considered. Now by eliminating the pancreatin in this preparation its value as a digestive vehicle will be retained while its contradictory therapeutic quality will have been dismissed. It is this sort of therapeutic judgment that the National Formulary is qualified to exercise and should assert. And this sort of therapeutic supervision will be practiced in the present revision.

It will seem a little foreign, at first, to take liberties with old formulas, but that is the essential province of revision. The Pharmacopoeia had to go through this kind of evolution. The first preparations of the early Pharmacopoeias were articles which had been introduced to medical practice as secret or proprietary preparations; and if science had not been stronger than tradition in the minds of the revisors, paregoric would still contain licorice and be a muddy mixture, Huxham's tincture would still contain saffron, Friar's Balsam (where did these names originate?) would contain balsam of Peru, myrrh and olibanum, etc. But revision meant the elimination of the non-essential as well as of improving composition and methods, and thus the Pharmacopoeia has gained in influence. So the way opens to the National Formulary—the way of improvement, the way of ethical and

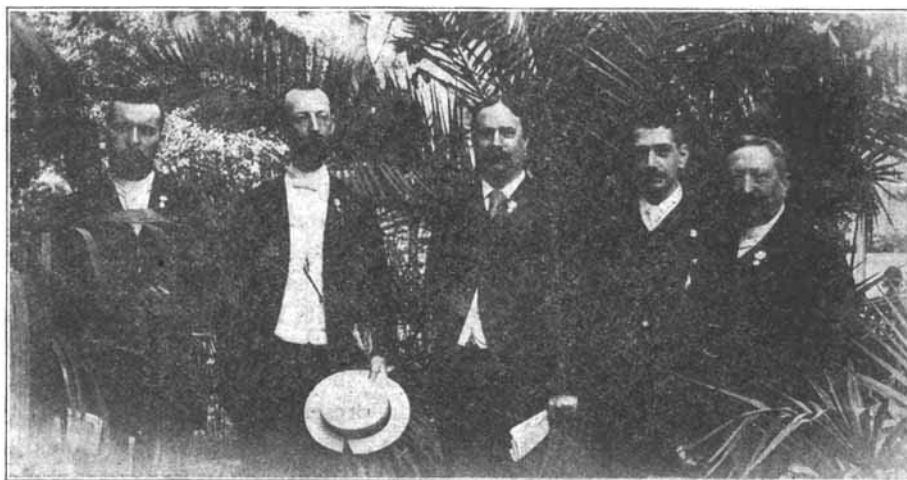
pharmaceutic soundness, the way of leadership rather than following. Thus may the Formulary increase in influence and make for itself an enlarged place in pharmacy.

The Longport meeting served to clarify and unite the revision committee on the principles to be followed in revision. Its work was fundamental. It came away united in aims, clear in purpose, and with a keener sense of the mission and position of the National Formulary.

Two and a half days of deliberation was required, not because there were divisions in the Committee, but because the fundamentals require careful and unhurried consideration. And most of the time was spent on the fundamentals.

Further details of the principles considered will be published later. The Committee will seek publicity in its work, and proposes to ask the opinion of pharmacists on all important changes before they are finally adopted. There is no secrecy in the work. The Committee regards itself as simply a representative body which needs and will ask for the support of its constituents in all the work of revision. The general principles of revision which were outlined will soon be published in detail, and also a list of proposed deletions and additions.

W. L. S.



AT NEW ORLEANS MEETING OF AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION, APRIL, 1891.

Left to right: E. J. Kennedy, E. L. Patch, Joseph P. Remington, S. L. Hilton and G. Rampsberger.
