

Section on Education and Legislation

Papers Presented at the Fifty-Ninth Convention

THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE COUNCIL ON PHARMACY AND CHEMISTRY OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

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The object of this paper is to direct the attention of American pharmacists to the work of the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association and to discuss more particularly the educational work that has been done in the past, and the possible elaboration of this same line of work in the future.

The origin and object of the Council has been well outlined by Torald Sollman in a series of articles entitled, "The Broader Aims of the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association," published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, and since then reprinted in the form of a pamphlet for ready reference.

The origin of the Council is also recorded in the Proceedings of the American Pharmaceutical Association for 1905 (Vol. 53, pp. 67-69), so that for the time being it will suffice to state that the Council was organized in February, 1905, for the direct purpose of investigating the then numerous and involved problems in connection with the advertising and use of proprietary remedies. As originally constituted, the Council consisted of three sub-committees—Pharmacy, Chemistry and Pharmacology—with the late C. S. N. Hallberg as secretary and "main-spring."

The functions of the Council were primarily judicial, and its first work was to assist in ridding the pages of the Journal of the American Medical Association of the advertisements of secret or semi-secret proprietary remedies.

To appreciate the really far-reaching effects of this work, more particularly the courage required to carry it on, one must compare a number of the Journal published five or six years ago with a corresponding number of today, and note the direct money loss in the way of "gilt edge" advertising that was involved.

At that time wiseacres on all sides predicted that the undertaking was rank folly, that the Journal of the A. M. A. could not exist without the patronage of proprietary medicine manufacturers, and that the life of the Council would necessarily be a short one.

Fortunately, these prophets had not taken into consideration the fact that the average American, and more particularly the average American physician, is willing to, and does occasionally, do some thinking for himself, and usually follows his thinking up with a practical adaptation of the course that appeals to him.

While the members of the Council, individually and collectively, were maligned and abused in some quarters for being "hare-brained" destructionists, their work was appreciated and praised by the better element in American medicine, and in a surprisingly short time physicians all over the country were willing to have the Council adopt much more stringent rules than the originators of the same had dared to hope for.

At a meeting of the Council held in 1908, the original ten rules were amended so as to provide for a more or less comprehensive investigation of the therapeutic claims made in connection with patented and proprietary remedies. A fourth sub-committee, on therapeutics, was organized, and the advertising pages of the Journal were given a second overhauling, resulting, as before, in a considerable loss of revenue from advertisers of a pecuniarily reliable type, but resulting also in a corresponding increase of respectability and an augmentation in the number of subscribers, showing that physicians at least are willing to learn and are capable of appreciating sacrifices for an evidently just cause.

No inconsiderable amount of the credit for the final success of the Council is due to the activity of the chemical laboratory of the American Medical Association under the supervision of W. A. Puckner, the present secretary of the Council.

This laboratory was organized early in 1906, and the annual reports of the work done, while largely made up of reprints of articles published in the Journal, are nevertheless interesting in that they present for ready reference the unusual, and in many respects original, chemical data involved in connection with the work of the Council.

These "Reports," with the "Reports of the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association," now also reprinted annually, the "Propaganda for Reform in Proprietary Medicines," and the current number of "New and Non-Official Remedies," contain a rather complete reflection of the various activities of the Council that are more fully recorded in the 8,000 or more pages of the weekly "Bulletins" circulated up to the present time.

As the total of these reports comprises upwards of 1,400 printed pages, it would be futile to endeavor to reflect the various accomplishments of the Council in the course of a short paper.

It may be permissible, however, to recall to your attention the work done in exposing the nature of the acetanilide mixtures, the discussion on the misuse of digestive ferments and liquid foods, and last, but by no means least, the exposition of the misleading claims that were made in connection with Arhovin, Somnos, Isopral, Chinosol, Probilin, Collargol, and a host of other proprietary preparations, now living or dead, which were being marketed by the manufacturers with a view of securing prompt returns on money invested in printer's ink.

Since 1908, the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry has been increasingly active in a systematic investigation of the various problems that are involved in present-day therapeutic practices and has busied itself with the development of plans for the systematic upbuilding of a rational materia medica by means of which it should be possible to eliminate at once and for always both therapeutic nihilism as well as therapeutic fetishism, and to place therapy on a firm foundation of well established truths.

From the very origin of the Council, the members have appreciated the need

for conducting an educational campaign in favor of recognized open formula or official medicaments.

The earliest efforts in this direction were undertaken by individual members of the Council through the publications of the Journal office.

Beginning in 1905, there appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association a series of articles entitled, "The Pharmacopoeia and the Physician." These articles were designed to call attention to some of the more reliable, official medicaments and to point out the advantages, to both physician and patient, that might accrue from the rational use of U. S. P. and N. F. remedies.

The articles were subsequently published in book form, and have been since reprinted on two different occasions.

Early in 1906, largely through the initiative and instrumentality of the late C. S. N. Hallberg, the American Medical Association published an epitome of the U. S. P. and N. F. under the title, "Manual of the U. S. Pharmacopoeia and the National Formulary."

This latter publication proved to be the immediate incentive for the now widespread U. S. P. and N. F. propaganda that has done so much to direct the attention of retail druggists to the possibility of improving their own standing in the community by developing the professional side of their calling.

Following the publication of these books, an effort was made, through a special committee, to induce teachers of materia medica to devote much, if not all, of their time to the discussion of well established official medicaments, so as to give to future generations of medical men a thorough grounding in the possible uses and limitations of the more important articles in our materia medica.

While this work has not been entirely futile, the practical results have not been commensurate with the time and money that have been expended. The reasons for this apparent failure are directly traceable to the redundancy of the present official standards for drugs and medicinal preparations and the ever threatening possibility of having one of the members of the state board of medical examiners propound a question regarding the possible uses and action of some little known or practically obsolete drug.

This latter obstacle is now in a fair way of being overcome, and with the co-operation of the several state boards and the teachers of materia medica and therapeutics, the Council has reasonable hopes of being able to issue a list of reliable medicaments to which systematic instruction in materia medica can largely be confined.

This then, leads up to the most recent and perhaps the most important piece of investigative work as yet undertaken by the Council; a systematic review and study of the moot points in drug therapy. While it is true that here the individual problems are legion, it is, nevertheless, expected that many of them can be satisfactorily studied in a reasonably short period of time, and that this work once thoroughly established, will be taken up and continued by individual investigators and by other medical organizations.

It is not expected to revolutionize the materia medica of the country in any given period of time, but it is expected that a systematic and conscientious investigation of the truth or falsity of certain statements made in connection with more or less well established remedies will serve to put the practice of drug

therapy on a firm foundation, against which the "isms" and "pathies" of the future will rail in vain.

The program, as outlined, is broad enough for all who are interested in the development of scientific medicine to participate in, and it is to be sincerely hoped that the members of the American Pharmaceutical Association, both individually as well as collectively, will lend their aid in clearing up some of the many perplexing questions in connection with the origin, composition and uses of well established drugs.

THE REAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE PHARMACIST.

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These conclusions are arrived at from a point of view secured by standing upon a mass of my own needs and deficiencies, that is heightened and made more secure by the deficiencies of many proprietors, with whom I have come in contact, and, more particularly, by the glaring defects of clerks I have employed.

It must be clearly understood that I am not presuming to criticise the syllabus of studies outlined by the able national committee which has had that matter in charge; indeed, I will be glad if I am able to assist that body of earnest workers in the good work they are doing.

It would seem, that a person knowing and knowing well, all the subjects that committee has prepared for a college curriculum, might be a fairly good pharmacist. Yet, I believe there will be many who will make, when the course of studies proposed is put into operation, a uniform rating of over ninety per centum, and then fail, sadly fail, to meet the requirements of the retail pharmacist of today, even in strictly pharmaceutical pursuits.

I will confess that my standard of success is quite different from that of many others who may be very properly rated as both sane and sound. The mere fact that a pharmacist wears large diamonds in his shiny, celluloid shirt front, or rides in an orange, red and green colored automobile, or cleaves placid waters with a sputtering motor boat, and pays for them all, while still having "money to burn," does not, in my opinion, prove that he is or has been a successful pharmacist. I am quite ready to grant that money making and money saving constitute one and a very essential element of success. Any one who, barring unusual misfortune, fails to do this can not be styled successful. But, beside providing for himself a comfortable living and a few ducats for a "rainy day," the really successful pharmacist must have made himself truly useful to the community in which he is located and, by all means, he must have won respect for the vocation in which he has served; glory and honor must have been added to his profession because of *his* accomplishments and because of *his* honorable practice. Only such practitioners will be remembered; only such practitioners will leave the world of pharmacy and, incidentally, the world at large, better because they lived, thus evidencing the only kind of success that is really worth seeking.

Now, to win such satisfactory results, one must, of all things, have an