

THE U. S. P. IN A RETAIL PHARMACY.

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The subject which I intend to present to you in this paper is one that is not only of great importance to a retail pharmacist but if not taken in hand at once, is going to be very detrimental to the profession. It is not the use of the Pharmacopoeia that is the trouble with the average druggist, but the lack of it. It is very unfortunate that it is necessary to treat of this subject at all, but owing to a large number of unethical proprietors, the use of the Pharmacopoeia is growing less every day.

There are several reasons for this, primarily "lack of habit." A druggist does more different kinds of work by routine than any other professional man. The first few years he is in a store he is learning or getting the habit. Which ever way this may be, good or bad, it will stick to him in after years.

Increased competition and a large stock of side lines, have caused proprietors to give less time to the pharmaceutical end of their store and more time to the front end or sundry department. They have changed from the old and established methods of making U. S. P. preparations from the crude drug, by percolation, maceration, or solution, to the new and time-saving plan of using the fluidextracts as a base for tinctures, spirits, infusions, syrups, etc. These men soon lose the habit and their clerks who are the future proprietors soon follow in the same rut. This is the cause of so many preparations being found by the pure food inspector to be the wrong strength. I believe that 99 out of 100 samples picked up by him, "weighed in the balance and found wanting" are either made from fluidextracts, or by men accustomed to this practice.

A druggist that is so unethical as to fill his stock bottles with this grade of goods will not take the time to test them but will take for granted that the formula on the bottle is correct. These men have lost the habit and are so unaccustomed to using the Pharmacopoeia that when it is necessary to use it they have become careless and make a bad job of it, rather than turning out a nice clear, full strength preparation. These men do not know that there are tests and assays given there for their special benefit. All preparations whether made from fluidextracts or crude drugs should be tested, if there is any possible way to do so, before dispensing.

To show how easy a mistake is liable to occur, we will take, for instance Fluid-extract Digitalis. This is the formula on the bottle for making the tincture,

Flid. ext. Digitalis.....	1 $\frac{3}{5}$ fl. oz.
Alcohol q. s.....	16 fl. oz.

The graduates that are found in a drug store are not marked in fifth ounces so the careless druggist, in order to save time, will not measure it down to the minimum, but will be contented to guess at $\frac{3}{5}$ oz., and as a result his tincture is not U. S. P. strength. Not only is the strength wrong but the druggist will label it "U. S. P." No druggist has a right to label any preparation U. S. P. that is not made according to the direction in the United States Pharmacopoeia. The

only druggists in the United States that assay and standardize their preparations are the ones that really make U. S. P. preparations.

Some of the assays and tests I believe are a little beyond some of the druggists. While college graduates are growing in number, there are still a good many of the profession that received their early education where scientific chemistry was not known and unless they have studied up on it since, they are not prepared to carry out the directions of the U. S. P. This however, should be no excuse because it is possible to procure clerks that are capable, and apparatus that is necessary to conduct any of these tests. The simpler these tests can be made, the better for everybody concerned.

I do not want you to think that this is the case everywhere, there is a bright side to pharmacy if we will only grasp it. The future is just what you men wish to make it. The membership of the A. Ph. A. is large enough to turn the tide one way or the other. One thing above all others, use your Pharmacopoeia and show your apprentice how to use it.

KEEPING UP ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP.

Apparently the only way to develop a big membership, and to keep it big, is by means of traveling organizers. Out in Iowa, as we reported last month, the membership of the State Association has been increased from 400 to 1200 through a county organization system, supplemented by the earnest efforts of a paid organizer (a woman, by the way) whose whole time has been devoted to the task for a year or more. Two or three other State Associations have practiced the same methods with success.

Such work, however, must apparently be kept up indefatigably. In Ohio, for instance, where the membership had grown in 1911 up to the surprising figure of 1481, interest began to slump as soon as the organizer resigned from his task, and at the recent annual meeting it was found that reports from the county organizations were far too infrequent in number and much too indifferent in character. The last organization campaign cost \$1786, and only brought in \$1522, but even at that it was to be considered a success since it added greatly to the strength of the body.—*Bulletin of Pharmacy*.