

The Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association

Volume I

FEBRUARY, 1912

No. 2

Office of Publication, 79-89 North Third St., Columbus, Ohio.

Subscription, \$3.00 per annum, within the United States. To Canada, \$3.35. To other foreign countries in Postal Union, \$3.50 per annum. Single copies, twenty-five cents.

Entered at the Postoffice at Columbus, Ohio, as Second-Class matter.

Papers and communications for insertion in the JOURNAL should be sent to the Editor, James H. Beal, Scio, Ohio. Subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer, H. M. Whelpley, 2342 Albion Place, St. Louis, Mo.

The Association does not accept the responsibility for the opinions of contributors. Offensive personalities must be avoided.

ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITY.

“I DID not like a statement made by your president in his annual address at the — convention, so I dropped my membership and since then have used my influence against the association.”

Probably every pharmaceutical association in the United States, local, state or national, has been similarly condemned because of the real or fancied offense of some of its members.

What a just and sapient decision! Because some one member or official chances to disagree with the individual on a question of policy, the whole association is to be condemned!

It may be that the seceding individual is enjoying increased rank or pay, or that the laws under which he does business have been materially improved, or that his business has been increased, or that he is able to obtain better prices for his goods because of the unselfish labors of this same association, but no matter, one member having offended, all have offended!

No doubt this aggrieved individual has frequently declaimed at the injustice of muck-raking newspapers which hold all druggists to be booze sellers and substitutes because a few have been proved to be such, but he makes himself guilty of the same offense when he summarily condemns a whole association for the faults of a few members.

In trying to imagine the mental condition which would lead a member to such an unjust and unreasonable decision the following suggest themselves:

One cause may be mere peevishness of temper, or an unwillingness to allow to

other members the same freedom in action and expression of opinion that he would claim for himself. We have frequently noticed that people who are freest in the criticism and condemnation of others themselves have sensibilities as delicate as Job's tenderest furuncle. These are infirmities of temperament, and while we condemn, we must also pity those who are thus afflicted.

Another reason may be the member's desire to have an excuse for altogether repudiating his obligations to a society which has a just claim upon his loyalty and service. The disposition and character of one who is willing to accept the benefits of services rendered at a sacrifice by others, while evading his just proportion of the financial and other burdens, cannot be properly described in printable language, and more need not be said.

The third and most probable explanation is that the complaining member has totally misconceived the relation of a voluntary society to its members, and its power to coerce their actions. When this is the cause there is hope that he will, upon reflection, revise his unjust judgment and again become a loyal and useful member of the society.

- In the case of a commercial corporation, the acts of an agent may be regarded as probably reflecting the predetermined policy of the whole, because the directorate of such a body can say to its servant, "Do this," and "he does it"; but in the case of a voluntary association when the same command is given to a member, he may do it or not, as it suits him.

A voluntary association is a combination of people who desire to act together in the furtherance of a common object or policy. What this object or policy shall be is determined by the consensus of opinion expressed by formal resolutions, or by a course of conduct so uniform and so long continued as to justify the belief that it represents the will of the majority. It is not determined by the isolated acts or statements of individual members, or even by officials, for over these the association can exert only a moral influence, and can enforce its commands only within wide and very generous limits.

While we are upon this subject of responsibility why not turn the question "end for end," and consider the responsibility of the member to his association? Whether the association is large or small, local or national, the chances are that it has done far more for him than he has ever done for it.

After many years of observation of association work, the writer is fully persuaded that every druggist who is eligible should be and can afford to be, if not an active, at least a supporting member of his local and of both the great national associations—more than this, that he cannot afford not to be a member of these.

What do the extra dues amount to when compared to the magnitude of the work to be done? Why should the great burden of reformatory and constructive work be borne by a few? If the active members give liberally of their time, energy and money for the development of better conditions in pharmacy, why should the inactive ones grudge the help of a few paltry dollars? For very shame they should tender their dues voluntarily, together with their apologies for not being able to do more of the active work themselves!

Shall the man engaged in pharmaceutical work, and who claims to be at least a semi-professional man, be shamed by the member of the hod-carriers' or bricklayers' union?

Who will fight his battles for him if the associations do not? If the laws are insufficient or unjust, what forces will secure their correction if not the associations? If he is suffering from unfair discrimination by another and more powerful branch of the trade, who will procure fair treatment for him if not the associations? If his business is being unjustly invaded by unqualified persons, upon whom can he rely to bring about the enactment of legislation to confine the sale of drugs to those whom the law requires to be qualified, if not upon the associations?

If he thinks he can accomplish any one of these things without the aid of organization, let him go before the State Legislature, or Congress, or other branches of the trade, as an individual, and thus realize what an insignificant grain of human sand he is when he attempts to act singly. Let him make but one such effort and he will ever after be a loyal and enthusiastic association man.

J. H. BEAL.



THE UNQUALIFIED MEDICINE VENDOR.

THE greatest hole in the average pharmacy act is that provision which permits the unqualified vendor to sell what are known as the "ordinary" or "household" drugs and medicines, a clause which is generally interpreted to mean that he may sell almost anything not recognized by the laity as dangerously poisonous—as well as some that are so recognized—and including the greater portion of the articles which are to be found in the druggist's stock.

Are we justified in hoping that public opinion will ever sufficiently change from its present state of indifference, founded mainly on misinformation, to permit the closing of this legal aperture?

If we appeal to the memories of those whose generation reaches beyond the earlier pharmacy acts we shall learn that the enactment of these first laws, feeble as they were, at one time seemed as improbable as the checking of the unqualified vendor seems now. May we not reasonably hope therefor that public opinion will continue to advance until it will favor legislation that will provide real and adequate safeguards for the public health.

Is there any real argument, except the selfish one, in favor of the legal restriction of the sale of medicines—those which are alleged to be harmless as well as those which are admittedly dangerous—to the registered pharmacist?

The vendor of ordinary varieties of merchandise must meet the competition of all comers, why should not the vendor of medical merchandise do likewise?

The two cases, however, are not at all parallel. If a citizen desires to establish a grocery or hardware store the only authority to be reckoned with is the credit man of the wholesaler from whom he expects to receive his supplies. If, however, he desires to practice pharmacy he must reckon not only with his jobber, but the law steps in and declares that, in the interest of public safety, he must serve a certain number of years of apprenticeship, and that finally he must satisfy a keenly critical examining board as to his fitness to safely compound and dispense drugs and medicines. If this heavy burden of educational preparation and experience is laid upon the man who calls himself a druggist, why should it not be equally imposed upon all who vend drugs and medicines?