

# EDITORIAL

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## A THOUGHT FOR CHRISTMAS.

"Be tolerant, be just, and fear naught. Hide not your face from the light, nor cover it in the dark. Deal squarely with an open and even hand, labor faithfully and in a cheerful spirit. Guard your own rights no more jealously than those of your fellows. Be steadfast in your loyalty to right. And the universal reign of Good-Will shall bring Peace on Earth as we journey along the path of happiness, through the pleasant and fruitful valley of service."

## A DEDUCTION FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Pausing on the threshold of 1924 and looking back to 1874 a record of progress in the sciences in which pharmacy shares may be read that foretells far greater achievements and successes during the next era, and places relatively greater responsibilities upon pharmacists. *Morale* has been an influence in these accomplishments, applying the definition—"belief in one another." The greater opportunities before us require that the belief and faith be put into more general practice, for within ourselves is every factor for success and the people have a right to demand the best service from such united endeavor.

E. G. E.

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"IT IS BETTER TO DOCTOR AT THE BEGINNING THAN AT THE END."

"**M**ANY men, many evils." The profession of pharmacy when aroused has been known to take up the sword and buckler for the right, and to quit itself with credit. The Food and Drugs Act, the Harrison anti-narcotic law, and the pharmaceutical code of ethics are notable illustrations of such activity. Its experience must lead it to recognize the dangers incident to pregnant times. Danger lurks in the uncontrolled and ill-advised efforts of volunteers whose enthusiasm for an embryo cause reaches a pitch of quasi-religious fervor and whose works result in abortion.

An instance of this was exhibited in the last legislature in Pennsylvania, in House Bill No. 348. Certain physicians domiciled in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, anticipating more deliberate action contemplated by the American Medical Association, put forward a bill that would have placed every laboratory in the State under the control of a physician. The bill limited every "laboratory procedure for the diagnosis or treatment of human disease" in such a way that it must thereafter be performed "under the direct supervision and upon the personal responsibility of a physician." Legal opinion was to the effect that the wording of the bill applied to pharmacists, pharmaceutical chemists, and manufacturing pharmacists.

An assay of this proposition is easy. The pharmacist is the one professional man with whom society is on the most familiar terms. While it places a white tie upon its minister, and a black gown upon its judge, and good clothes along with the benefit of the doubt as to social standing upon its physician, society asks its pharmacist to earn his living by merchandizing during the intervals between the times of public need for his professional services. When the public is ready, the pharmacist in his part as a professional man must be ready; and, be it said to his credit, he is. The professional man who has also a successful business is not likely to submit without complaint to an order to practice his profession "under the direct supervision and upon the personal responsibility" of any man of any other pro-

fession. In this particular instance, the pharmacist has met the legal requirements for the practice of his profession in a way not demanded of physicians; and as to his business, that is his own business.

House Bill No. 348 went further and placed in the hands of physicians the right to inspect all laboratories (a kind of blanket search warrant) along with the power to suspend (without appeal) the operation of any laboratory deemed unsatisfactory. This was a subversion of Americanism. One fundamental characteristic of the structure of our Government is the separation of the executive, the administrative and the judicial functions; but in the matter of laboratories this bill sought to combine these three and to centralize them in the medical profession.

Here is food for thought for pharmacists. *Sunt bona, sunt quaedam mediocria, sunt mala plura.* Of course enthusiasts make up a certain proportion of the crop, and of these a certain percentage cannot be trusted. Pennsylvania has no monopoly in this type of enthusiast. Hence legislatures the country over must by organized effort be watched lest that which born in full time might become healthy and a joy, be born prematurely a monster or a corpse. House Bill No. 348 in Pennsylvania was killed in committee; let it be to all concerned like the dead hawk nailed on the barn door—a warning and a sign of vigilance in defense.

DAVID WILBUR HORN

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#### DRUG TREATMENT: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

THE prelector, this year, of the inaugural sessional address at the British Pharmaceutical Society's School of Pharmacy, was Dr. W. E. Dixon, well and favorably known pharmacologist and author of textbooks and contributor of monographs on pharmacological subjects to other publications, among the latter that in "The British Pharmaceutical Codex." The subject of his address was "Drug Treatment: Past, Present and Future." The speaker at the October meeting of the Philadelphia Branch, A. Ph. A., was Dr. Horatio C. Wood, whose interest in and service for pharmacy and pharmacists is comparable with that of Dr. Dixon; the work of the former and that of his antecedents have contributed largely to American pharmacy for more than a century. Dr. Dixon is an honorary member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, and Dr. Wood is an active member of the American Pharmaceutical Association.

The subject of the paper by the latter, "The Present Trends of Therapeutics as Illustrated by the New Drugs Recommended for Admission to the Pharmacopœia," is printed in this number of the JOURNAL, A. PH. A.

Brief comments are made on Dr. Dixon's address; the excerpts which are included present parts of the discussions only. He cited the fact that animal products have assumed a great importance in pharmacy and pharmaceutical chemistry and impressed the need of knowledge of animal anatomy and physiology as essential to the educated pharmacist. His reference to the human system as a drug laboratory follows:

"Our whole outlook on treatment has been altered by recent and gradually accumulated knowledge that the animal body elaborates its own drugs, stores them generally at the seat of

formation and doles them out to the tissues to meet the needs of the animal economy. Some of these are crystalline alkaloids, like adrenaline from the suprarenal capsules and thyroxine from the thyroid gland. Others, like insulin and pituitrin, have yet to be prepared in a pure form, but we know that the former changes glucose in some way so that its oxidation can be continued by other processes in the body, and that its absence results in an excess of sugar accumulation in the blood, a condition termed diabetes; pituitrin, I have reasons for believing, is the chemical agent in the normal woman which causes the uterus to contract. Ovarian activity excites the pituitary gland and determines the liberation of pituitrin into the circulation, and it is well recognized that its use in obstetrics has largely superseded that of ergot. I cannot offer a more convincing example of the inner meaning of drug actions. The normal functions of the body are regulated at least partly by these natural drugs, and it may be that all functionings are of this nature, and the object of a nerve supply is to localize the liberation of the drug in some definite situation."

In commenting on the cure of disease due to the introduction of some extraneous factor, he said that diseases due to protozoa may be cured by destroying the causal agent of the disease by drugs, but the action is not necessarily brought by the direct effect of the drug on the causal agent—the organic compounds have no decided effect on the spirochætes of syphilis in the test-tube, but they destroy them in the body; emetine does not kill the amœba of tropical dysentery, except in the human body; microorganisms causing pneumonia are destroyed by ethylhydrocuprein.

In discussing the mechanism of the action of drugs, Dr. Dixon presented some physico-chemical problems that await solution and in which absorption through living membranes has an important part—"Why is sodium chloride absorbed so readily into the blood and why is magnesium sulphate not absorbed?" "Why should iron be absorbed with such difficulty and arsenic with such ease?"

He said that "the vast group of hypnotic drugs differing widely in their chemistry have one common factor—the power of diffusion into living cells, comparative insolubility in water, and a greater solubility in fat and fat-like compounds."—The most powerful hypnotics are those which combine a very slight solubility in water with a very high solubility in "brain lipid."

The following lines are from the concluding remarks of Dr. Dixon:

"I have endeavored to show that the future of curative treatment lies in drugs, and that the discovery of new drugs or methods of treatment can only be attained by those who have had the requisite scientific training."

Dr. Wood's address contains the following statement:

"It is only a few years ago that the Rabbis of the pharmacological sanhedrim were sneering at the idea of specifics in medicine. To-day, the search for new remedies is frankly a hunt for these contemned curatives."

Underlying professional attainments there must be adequate education. The individual needs not only experience but a knowledge which enables him to understand what he sees and does. There is a widening field of medical science before us in which medicine, chemistry and the divisions of special and direct concern to pharmacists will collaborate because thereby the public is best served—progress has been made in such coöperative endeavor.

E. G. E.