

No claim is made, in each instance, for the correctness of the labels where the attempt has been made to decipher them with a magnifying glass. It is to be hoped that some Italian apothecary may some day prepare a list of titles from the originals, if this has not already been done.

3. Concerning the articles suspended from the ceiling, Schelenz regards them as "probably" being "cakes of wax, roots strung on strings, queer drugs and wax candles." Without an actual inventory of an Italian apothecary shop of this period, it may be useless to speculate as to who is more likely correct, Forrer or Schelenz.

4. Of the "Spanschachteln," Schelenz† states that up to the middle of the 19th century, they were used almost exclusively for packing "confects, dry medications and ointments."

Of further interest is the fresco representing a market scene with two booths in the background. Both of these booths open upon the market, the entire front being removed during business hours.

THE MODERN TOWER OF BABEL.*

BY ROBERT S. LEHMAN.

Some 6000 years ago, sacred history tells us, the inhabitants of the then-known world, who lived in the fertile valley of Mesopotamia, began the erection of a monumental temple of great height in honor of the pagan god Baal. This was known as the Tower of Babel.

As they were progressing with their task, the great Jehovah, who would brook no other gods beside himself, caused these misguided workers to be stricken with a malady, which rendered them unable to understand each other's language; in other words, he created a confusion of tongues.

At the present time, a similar transition is in progress, but of a reversed order. In other words, in the modern Tower of Babel, which is our wonderful City of New York, folk of all tongues flock together and are gradually being converted into a people speaking a common language, which we trust and hope will be raised in praise and reverence of the great Jehovah.

That this process is a laborious and slow one, goes without saying, for many of those who have come from foreign lands to establish a new home on our shores have passed the age when the elasticity of their intellect will permit them to acquire the language of their adopted country. So, naturally, they flock together in the sections where the people of their race and tongue congregate and sometimes even fear to venture outside of the confines of their district.

The youthful members of these colonies are more fortunately situated, for thanks to our excellent public school system, they soon acquire the English language, and, I am sorry to say, often forget or ignore the tongue of their forefathers.

Those of middle age, who are obliged to be the bread-winners of the older and younger members of their families, are forced to learn the common language, as a matter of sheer necessity, as otherwise they would soon be submerged in the relentless struggle for their daily bread.

† "Geschichte der Pharmacie," p. 382.

* Read before New York Branch, A. Ph. A., January meeting, 1923.

The most numerous group of the peoples undergoing transformation in this melting-pot of ours is the Hebrew or Yiddish. This division is more racial than national, as their homelands embraced portions of various countries in Eastern Europe, namely, Russian Poland, Russia proper, Galicia in Austria and Roumania. Besides the languages of these various countries, they speak the Yiddish dialect, which is simply an archaic German, similar to the language spoken in Germany in the 16th century, modified by idioms acquired in the countries in which they lived before coming to America.

The bulk of their immigration dates from the late 80's, when the persecution of the Jews by their Russian fellow subjects forced them to seek new homes across the seas.

Their industrial activities extend into various lines, professional, commercial and manufacturing. The total number who admit speaking the dialect is, according to the census of 1920, 946,000.

The next largest group of foreign-born residents of the City of New York are the English-Irish-Scotch, emanating from the British Isles. Of these there are, according to the census, 897,000. However this paper will not consider them as they speak the language of the country and are soon undistinguishable from the rest of the native-born population.

The third group in point of numbers is the Italian, which the census places at 803,000. The great influx of the sons and daughters of sunny Italy dates back to the end of the Civil War, when the reconstruction of our country required the services of a large number of hardy and industrious laborers, and the rewards of this labor having proved so satisfactory, soon many of the more educated classes were attracted to this country. The result has been that at the present time the Italian race composes a goodly proportion of the population of the United States, and its sons have entered all fields of industrial and professional endeavor.

The fourth group, according to the census, is the German, of which 690,000 admit the ability to speak the tongue of their fathers. I am inclined to question the accuracy of these figures, for there is no doubt that the descendants of the German immigrants who came here between the years 1840 and 1914 number more than a million and a large proportion are able to speak the German language more or less perfectly. As indicated before, German immigration received its great impetus between the years of 1840 and 1860, when the political and economic conditions in Germany, with its innumerable petty states, became unbearable to many of its most enlightened inhabitants, and after an ineffectual attempt to establish a republic or at least a liberal constitutional empire in 1848, by means of a popular revolution, men and women of all classes left the shores of the Fatherland for a new home in America, where their descendants have been successful in practically every branch of professional, industrial and commercial life.

The fifth linguistic group is the Russian, which claims 221,000. These figures must include Russian-speaking Hebrews, who are also enumerated in the Yiddish group, as the number of Muscovite Russians in New York will be much less than the figures indicate. The Russian immigrants in this part of the world hardly include any of the bourgeois class of the home country, as that group before the world war was too small and prosperous to emigrate, so that those who have made their home here either belong to the laboring classes or the professions, especially of music and art.

The sixth group is the Polish, numbering 161,000. These came from Russian Poland, Galicia in Austria and the Polish-speaking provinces of Prussia, now all included in the Republic of Poland. These have been emigrating to the United States steadily since the Civil War, for similar reasons as those which actuated the Italians, as the conditions were attractive for hardy and industrious laborers.

Of the groups of less than 100,000, there are the Magyar or Hungarian, with 76,000; the Swedish, 60,000; the Norwegian, 40,000; Spanish, 32,000; Roumanian, 26,000 (greater part of which may also be included in the Yiddish class); Greek, 25,000; Czechs, 25,000; Slovaks, 15,000; Finlanders, 12,000; Armenians, 10,000; French, 10,000; Danish, 10,000; and the smaller groups, including the Albanians, Syrians, Chinese, Croatians, Japanese, Lithuanians, Persians, Portuguese, Ruthenians, Serbians, Slovenians and Ukrainians (which latter class may perhaps be enumerated among the Russians).

In the year 1919, there were published in the City of New York, foreign language newspapers and magazines to the number of 165, as follows:

Albanian	2	Greek	8	Roumanian	1
Arabian	8	Hebrew	3	Russian	7
Armenian	2	Hungarian	8	Serbian	3
Bohemian	8	Italian	17	Slovak	4
Chinese	2	Japanese	2	Slovenian	2
Croatian	3	Lithuanian	4	Spanish	19
Finnish	2	Norwegian-Danish	2	Swedish	3
French	6	Persian	1	Ukrainian	1
German	17	Polish	6	Yiddish	23
		Portuguese	1		

These conditions certainly make New York the most polyglot and cosmopolitan community of the globe, and the merchant and business-man, especially the retail pharmacist, should recognize this fact. Those established in sections included or contiguous to the districts inhabited by these foreign-speaking peoples, should endeavor to obtain at least a working acquaintance with the languages spoken, if they wish to hold their ground. My own experience has shown that the old folks among them, who are unable to learn English, are very grateful to native-born Americans who try to understand and speak to them in their own vernacular, even though the vocabulary be limited and the syntax somewhat ungrammatical. In fact, I have discovered that they will gladly patronize stores where the American proprietor and his employees show respect for the language by attempting to acquire it.

It is also our duty as citizens to set a good example to the new-comers in our midst and to conduct ourselves in such a manner as to inculcate respect and admiration for the republican institutions of our country. We must show them that obedience to the law can be voluntary and by consent of the governed, and must not necessarily be backed by the armed forces of the state. By sustaining these principles, we will convert our foreign-born population into good and patriotic American citizens.

However, as stated before, the public school for the children and the necessity for the mature element to go out into the world of pitiless competition to acquire a living for themselves and their families, soon show the necessity of acquiring the language of our country.

So our modern Tower of Babel is causing the transition from a "confusion of tongues" to a single language, spoken and understood by all, and is tending to hasten the millenium when the brotherhood of all mankind will finally be recognized and "swords will be beaten into ploughshares" for all time.

THE BUSINESS SIDE OF PHARMACY

This department is devoted to the discussion of problems of business administration and commercial policies relating to the various branches of pharmacy.

CONDUCTED BY DR. ROBERT P. FISCHER.*

"The greatest business asset of a modern pharmacy is a well-conducted prescription and drug department." This is not the statement of a theorist or of one whose intense interest in scientific pharmacy leads him to minimize the importance of the drug store as a distributing station for merchandise that is not allied to pharmaceuticals—even distantly. It is the statement, in substance, of a successful director of one of the largest drug stores in the third largest city of the United States. He knows whereof he speaks from many years of daily experience in an establishment that has served the public in practically one location for sixty-five years.

In a paper read before the Section of Commercial Interests of the American Pharmaceutical Association at Cleveland, he reminded those who are engaged in the retail drug business that there is such a thing as keeping step with the advancing times without losing step with certain firmly set professional principles that are as old as pharmacy itself and which none who are in the drug business to-day can afford to ignore. The key-note of the only sane policy for the retail drug store of to-day is to keep the prescription department the heart of the business.

Can and does the prescription department pay? It certainly can, but whether it does or not depends on the man who is running it. Modern business takes it for granted that no service is rendered and no goods are sold without a direct profit although such a direct profit may at times come to the business man by indirect means. We have been treated from time to time with newspaper articles charging pharmacists with profiteering on prescriptions because the person who preferred the charges found out that ingredients of a prescription can sometimes be purchased individually at a low price which to his mind was all out of proportion to the charge made by the apothecary for the finished product. If the same type of reasoning were followed in arriving at the proper charges for anything else besides prescriptions, every business man would by the same token be a profiteer.

The general attitude of pharmacists who seek to avoid charges of profiteering by making prescription prices ridiculously low, is to be deplored. Any department that is to retain the interest of the druggist and receive a large share of his attention must be profitable. When druggists shake their heads in despair and give voice to their disgust by saying that they wish they could get rid of their prescription departments entirely because they do not pay, they are beginning to follow the line of least resistance and they discourage the most vital part of the drug store's work.

If, on the other hand, the figures show that the prescription department is

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