

EDITORIAL

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THE HEADQUARTERS' BUILDING FUND.

AN AUDIT of the accounts of the Treasurer of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION for the fiscal year 1925 has just been completed, and the detailed report will appear in the next issue of the YEAR BOOK.

The total assets on December 31, 1925, were \$263,356.01, exclusive of Trust Funds, as compared with \$199,107.60, on December 31, 1924, \$112,102.61 on December 31, 1923, and \$102,447.50 on December 31, 1922. The Trust Funds totaled \$13,915.35 on December 31, 1925, \$13,436.69 on December 31, 1924, \$12,903.38 on December 31, 1923, and \$12,337.78 on December 31, 1922.

The balance to the credit of the Headquarters' Building Fund on December 31, 1925, was \$174,274.63, representing the total received by the Treasurer up to that date, from contributors, less \$66.10, the amount of unpaid checks. The total net subscriptions for which cards had been received and tabulated on December 31, 1925, were \$490,297.68, as all cancellations are promptly deducted. The audit of the subscriptions, made as of July 31, 1925, showed the total of subscriptions in arrears to be \$17,789.15 and this total has not increased out of proportion since that date.

The purpose of this statement is to draw attention to the very satisfactory payment of the pledges to this time. If all the subscriptions now held had been obtained during the first week of the campaign, payment of only two-fifths of the total could have really been expected by December 31, 1925, on the five-year payment plan offered, as only four semi-annual periods have elapsed. This would have amounted to \$196,119.08 and the actual amount collected was \$174,274.63, although the subscriptions have been received over the entire time; about \$100,000 since September 1, 1925.

Collections are, therefore, keeping pace with the reasonable expectancy so far, coupled with the total of subscriptions; this indicates the interest which has been shown in this great undertaking and the seriousness with which the pledges were made.

E. F. K.

The results shown will be pleasing information for the contributors, induce additional subscriptions, and persuade others to subscribe to the greatest and most far-reaching proposition ever undertaken by pharmacists for the cause of pharmacy and all that is comprehended by its service.

A better illustration of the foresight and dependability of those interested in pharmacy could hardly be given than that in the foregoing statement. E. G. E.

THE BEGINNINGS OF MEDICINE.

WILBUR C. Abbott, in the *Yale Review*, says that "the poor old past is indeed, pretty well discredited nowadays." Further on he states—"It (the poor old past) was infused with such odd enthusiasms for all sorts of things which we now

recognize as sheer absurdities, and which would be wholly unendurable but for two things—they enable us to appreciate our own greatness, and they afford such admirable material for satire.” The quoted lines show, of course, that the writer applies the measure of others. In this brief comment, without further reference to the foregoing, some of the beginnings of medicine will be referred to and a recently published book—“The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization”—by Walter Addison Jayne, M.D., has suggested the writing.

In this interesting volume Dr. Jayne deals with the ancient methods of religious healing and the pagan gods of medicine. The author considers in sequence the healing gods of ancient Egypt up to those of more recent periods. He writes—“It should be noted that one of the most important features of the early history of medicine is the essential uniformity in principle of beliefs prompted by the human religious instinct as they relate to the healing customs of the peoples widely separated by space and time, differing only in details of racial and national coloring.” “The methods of healing disease, devised by the gods and communicated to their representatives, the priests, were not subject to improvement by man, hence they were jealously guarded, preserved and became traditional.” The superstition that sickness was the work of an evil spirit and every form of disease required a specific demon made it necessary to classify them in a way that has a relation, although very remote, to the *materia medica*.

Dr. H. H. Rusby has given us an interesting account of South American ceremonials; our Indians still go through certain forms for making their medicines more effective; the African witch doctor adds astrological readings and incantations to his administrations; the natives of Congo tempt the demon to come out of the body of a sick person by bright colors, etc. The point, however, in this comment is that, notwithstanding the traditional customs in connection with the administrations of some of the medicines, our *materia medica* is indebted to the poor old past and primitive people for a number of its most important drugs. The Malay acquainted us with *Nux Vomica*, the African gave us *Physostigma* and *Strophanthus*, we are indebted to our Indians for *Cascara*, and those of South America employed *Cinchona* long before it cured the Countess of Chinchon of the fever. Medicine has its romance and its history has acquainted us with remedial agents that have added to the value of our *materia medica* and are used daily in the treatment of the sick.

E. G. E.

IMPORTANCE OF A SENSE OF NUMBERS.

RECENTLY the head of a university department commented on the inability of many students to grasp the sense of numbers. They were adept in making calculations, but deficient in making comparisons with figures; a number meant just that to them, but did not enable them to discover errors by the application of judgment. The same problem, in which figures only were involved, did not evidence the difficulties of the very same students in making calculations wherein weights and measures or other factors of the transactions entered.

Reference was also made to the deficiency of what he termed the sense of numbers in the use of an adding machine that had not been cleared before making