

2. A chemical combination probably took place between the morphine hydrochloride and the aspirin, giving the product a narcotic effect resembling heroine. We believe this to be true because the physical conditions of the contents of the capsule and the pronounced narcotic effect produced indicated it. The contents of the capsule prepared from morphine hydrochloride, aspirin and phenacetin, slightly moistened and heated occasionally on the radiator, underwent the same physical change and produced a similar pronounced narcotic effect.

3. We believe that when prescriptions containing aspirin and morphine are called for, the pharmacist should be very careful that the material be dry and *the patient should be cautioned*.

4. The suspected chemical combination of morphine and aspirin should be further investigated.

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### THE PRESCRIPTION DEPARTMENT.\*

BY ROBERT J. RUTH.

Some time ago a friend of mine, whom I had not seen for a couple of years, dropped into my office. He is a pharmacist located in a town of goodish size about 150 miles from New York. He is no Babbitt and whenever I have the opportunity for a visit with him, I carry away a good thought or two to ponder over.

He has been in business for perhaps a quarter of a century, has owned several drug stores in various locations in the same town, but to my knowledge has never owned more than one store at a time.

Possessing an excellent education, academic as well as scientific, and being a prominent member of this ASSOCIATION, he has—as one would suspect—always felt a strong leaning toward the professional side of pharmacy. Although some of his stores have been large establishments, with much miscellaneous merchandising and fountain business in evidence, they have always presented a highly dignified appearance and exuded an atmosphere strongly smacking of professionalism. The man's appearance and personality enhanced the reputation for accurate and trustworthy prescription compounding which his stores always enjoyed in the community.

Last week he told me that he has moved to a new location and that his store is now a strictly professional pharmacy, with no fountain or side lines, and that he is doing splendidly. He has at last found it possible to open the flood gates to a suppressed desire and practice professional pharmacy exclusively.

Included among the interesting contents of the narrative which he related was the statement that under present conditions only one drug store in fifty can operate successfully as an exclusive prescription store.

After he left, I reflected upon that statement. It means that in this broad land of ours with its more than one hundred million inhabitants, there is only enough prescription and other professional work available to support about 1000 strictly professional stores. I believe my friend is correct in his estimate.

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\* Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing, A. PH. A., Portland meeting, 1928.

It hardly seems possible that one thousand prescription stores could fill the prescriptions necessary for the health of approximately one hundred and twenty million people—even granting that all of the drug stores not confining their operations to a strictly professional practice would fill many of the available prescriptions.

The truth of my friend's statement only becomes obvious when one considers the great number of dispensing physicians and the multitudinous variety of cults which exist, the members of which practice without resorting to the administration of medicines.

What will be the future status of drug stores? For a number of years several prominent leaders in pharmacy have prophesied that there would come a day to bring about a division of drug stores into two classifications—the merchandising store and the professional pharmacy. I am becoming convinced that they have prophesied correctly.

The population of the United States is steadily increasing, but the increase in the number of drug stores is out of all proportion to the growth of population. We know that many of the stores fail, but new ones spring up to take their places, and it seems evident that when new stores are reasonably located and properly financed and managed they invariably prosper.

How is this possible? Is the volume of actual drug business increasing so exceptionally? We know that it is not. The vast majority of drug stores are making their profits from the soda fountain and luncheonette, cigars and cigarettes, films and cameras, stationery, bristle goods, rubber goods, fountain pens and pencils, a heterogeneous stock of toilet preparations and toilet accessories, electrical supplies, gifts, holiday goods and other merchandise too numerous to list and of a scope that is astounding to contemplate.

Although it jokes about the merchandising drug store, the public likes it and patronizes it. I am convinced that this type of store has not only come to stay, but that it will increase in numbers. The public demands it for its convenience. We have not even begun to see the potentialities of this type of merchandising store, conveniently located, open all day and evening—seven days a week.

Regardless of how little actual professional work these merchandising stores do, they each do a little and some do considerable, and collectively they do so much that they make my friend's figures true, because there is only enough professional business left to support about one thousand strictly professional stores in the United States.

A few of the colleges of pharmacy offer minimum courses of four years of study—the list is growing. In 1932 all of the colleges holding membership in the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy will raise the length of their courses leading to a degree to a minimum of four years. What then? Will those four-year graduates open merchandising stores? Some may—most of them will not because if the business world appealed to them, they would hardly have studied pharmacy for four years.

Very surely, soon after 1932, I am convinced, will begin the movement leading toward the classification of our present-day drug stores into two groups—one, the merchandising stores, which will surrender all of the professional business and hardly miss it and operate without registered pharmacists and increase in numbers; the other class will operate as strictly professional pharmacies, with registered phar-

macists who will compound prescriptions, dispense drugs and medicines and do laboratory diagnosis. These professional pharmacies will not carry side lines and will be located very much as physicians' offices—in office buildings and in other locations where the high overhead will be eliminated. Perhaps then, if they are given all of the professional pharmaceutical work to do, twenty or twenty-five thousand of them can prosper under present conditions.

The potentialities are unlimited, but dispensing physicians must prescribe and some of the drugless cults must pass into oblivion—which they will—before the prescription business shows an appreciable increase. A glimmer of hope is found in the fact that in America and abroad scientists are manifesting a new and keen interest in all of the drugs and the possibility of many of them yielding valuable principles not as yet discovered.

Just how will the colleges be affected? Until just recently they graduated students in two years; now they require three years and soon the minimum will be four years. A simple problem in mental arithmetic! By graduating one-half as many pharmacists with four years of training, the colleges will have as many students as they had when they were graduating pharmacists under two-year courses. One half as many pharmacists with twice as much training! It does seem that we should be able to report progress.

Since the beginning of civilization, the pharmacist has played an important rôle in the conservation and protection of public health. I have the utmost confidence that his services will be increasingly needful and that the future of pharmacy is indeed hopeful. To-day it is passing through an extremely crucial period. It will emerge the better for the experience. I do not believe that the altering can be hurried—it is a case of time and patience during this period of evolution.

Meanwhile, those pharmacists, who really desire more professional work for their stores and who make an effort to get it, will invariably succeed. I can picture in my mind many splendid pharmacies which I have been in, located from coast to coast and from Canada to the Gulf. There is one in Louisville, Ky., that stands out in my mind. It is a beautiful store which does a large business in splendid drug store merchandise. It has a soda fountain, too, but there is a certain dignity about the establishment that would indicate that they have even professionalized commercialism. Across the rear of the store is a vast expanse of plate glass, behind which white-gowned pharmacists are compounding prescriptions and dispensing drugs and medicines in an immaculate, splendidly equipped laboratory. The psychological effect of this arrangement upon the many patrons has resulted in an immense professional practice for this store. This was one store which wanted professional business and went after it. Professional business came from physicians and patients who have the utmost confidence in the store and which I can attest is deserved.

During the last observance of Pharmacy Week, a pharmacist in Oakland, California, installed a completely equipped prescription case in a large show window. Prescriptions were compounded by white-gowned pharmacists in full view of the public eye. The attention it attracted exceeded anything previously anticipated. Prescription business greatly increased during Pharmacy Week, which might be expected, and at the end of the week the prescription case was taken out of the window. It was considered to have been a huge success. Then even more

gratifying—the following week the prescription business showed a fifteen per cent increase.

Pharmacy Week—October 14th to 20th—observed in 1928 in the United States, Canada, England, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania—not only affords every retail druggist in the United States a splendid opportunity to bring to the public attention the professional side of his establishment, and its potentialities are far greater. By preparing the public mind—making it pharmacy conscious—it will serve to hasten the day when the practice of pharmacy will emerge from the chaotic era through which it is now struggling.

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### WHY NOT CREATE A "PHARMACY FLAG?"\*

BY EDWARD SWALLOW.

It has occurred to the writer that while every nation, state, city and many institutions have their own particular flag or emblem to represent them, the ancient profession of Pharmacy has never adopted this means of inspiration and distinction.

From time immemorial, flags have played an important part in shaping the destinies of the human family and its various activities. The flag appeals to something in the nature of man that has a subtle influence in creating great thoughts, and actions—it is a symbol of past heroic deeds or worthy achievements, and high ideals.

The profession of pharmacy has served humanity for thousands of years, each passing year giving better and more scientific service to the community at large. If ever a profession deserved to have an emblem or flag of its own, it is the profession of pharmacy—a calling that has meant so much in the conservation and protection of public health and welfare.

Stretching back to the very dawn of history we find names of men who have laid the foundation of this honorable calling, and their efforts in the cause of humanity have been nobly followed by thousands of others who, by their work, have built up a science and art second only to the profession of medicine in importance and general helpfulness to their fellowmen; pharmacy has indeed a worthy and honorable past to look back upon and to be proud of.

Modern pharmacy owes its ability to render the public a high-class scientific service to the self-sacrificing and unselfish labors of men of all the civilized nations. England, Germany, France, America, Russia, Switzerland and other countries have produced pharmacists who have added to the science and art generally of the profession of pharmacy. What has happened in the past—one of glorious achievements—is going on to-day, and will never stop. The future of pharmacy will become of ever-increasing importance, of increasing science and knowledge, and of increasing value in regard to its special service to the medical profession and the community at large.

Flags of nations represent the symbols of home and country, national achievements and ideals, reminders of great deeds and worthy men. The flag is the

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\* Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing, A. Ph. A., Portland meeting, 1928. The paper was referred to a Committee of which the author is Chairman, to report at the Rapid City meeting.