

"RECOMMENDED BY ALL RELIABLE DRUGGISTS."*

BY IVOR GRIFFITH.

To-day's issue of a tabloid newspaper carries a score of advertisements of patent medicines and flim-flammeries of all sorts. Some are the old reliables without which neither Tompkins Corner nor Broadway could get along.

The medicine for which babies carry on is, of course, featured, and so is the versatile corrective of halitosis and of the ubiquitous dandruff—local and express. The blue-bottle fly-away arch enemy of acid and itch is also in prominent place.

Equally seeable is the spot chosen to disport in style the valid virtues of the salve that soothes and settles every bruise and burn.

With these we have no quarrel. Their survival is evidence of their right to serve.

To subdue a hectic midnight soloist, crescendoing in colicky screams, who performs alone and successfully a veritable sextette from Lucifer—is an achievement worthy of note. They tell us that the medicine children cry for has been known to do this; if it be so, it is worthy of a place in the son—and in the medicine cabinet.

But such old-timers do not annoy us as we meet with them in the pages of our daily paper. Rather they make us somewhat thankful for the thought they bring, namely, that the will has not yet completely done away with the pill—and that science, neither Christian nor pagan, has deprived us of all our pleasant fallibilities.

No indeed! We have no quarrel with these homely home medicines. But we do get cross and dandery when advertising copy writers break out in a rash and newspaper owners permit their papers to run off on a spree.

To-day must be one of their spree days—and here is a true recital of the orgy of shame. Girth control motivates two of its broadcasting layouts.

"Lose weight where you most want to." That is the claim of one advertised product, and what a delicate sense of anatomic geography this slogan suggests. This is another ridiculous bit of copy:

"1930 Belles are not fat.—This great change (to modern slender styles) started when science discovered the chief cause of obesity—this factor was embodied in Hokum prescription tablets. People have used them for over 20 years—millions of boxes of them. That is one great reason for the slender figures you see everywhere to-day—simply take four tablets daily until weight comes down to normal."

"*Simply* take four tablets"—and the inspired copy-writer must have known that his copy was meant for simpletons.

A red-ray lamp is also pictured as the health-restorer par excellence.

"Entirely unlike the damaging ultraviolet or X-ray. Positively cannot burn or blister." Now this particular red-ray lamp emits the ordinary heat rays that an electric toaster—or a red-hot dish of macaroni emit—and to compare it with the ultraviolet lamp or the X-ray is about as reasonable as comparing soup with soap.

Yeast is good for the chest—the medicine chest. Once a chef—now a doctor—and with credentials from geheimrats and physicians-in-waiting-to queens and ten-spots, yeast leaves the kitchen for the medicine kit.

* Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing, A. Ph. A., Baltimore meeting, 1930.

A mouth wash graduates to halitotic eminences with one breath—and with another becomes an eradicator of stationary dandruff. No doubt its next achievement will be as a paralytic to the perpendicular proclivities of the non-stationary kind of dandruff.

The athletic foot vies with parrot-fever as a newly discovered advertising malady—and the fear that four out of five may have it, vanishes with an eagerness to check and double check “the film.”

Elsewhere is spread the lying message of a new star on the hokum firmament—a panacea that challenges the medical dictionary to name any disease which it will fail to cure. The faces of low-priced and lower-principled (alleged) physicians adorn the copy. They testify to its marvels in words they never had the intelligence to voice or understand.

And people who run and read—read and run to the nearest shop to beg and buy a bottle.

Run and read—yes, but read on to the end—and note particularly the phari-saical phrase—“recommended by all reliable druggists.”

There is the thing that irritates. The fat-reducing fraud—the hokum patent medicine—drugs and dregs, all have used this hackneyed, insulting and downright dishonest statement.

Elsewhere we find it part of the claim of a disreputable “restorer of vitality, vigor and vim.”

Corn-removers, hair slickers, face-changers, intestinal lubricants, yeast from the West, greek-letter vitamins and alphabet soups, hair dyes, wrinkle chasers, candy laxatives, iron tonics, raw roughage and some more raw nonsense and flim-flammeries complete the group of articles which according to the daily paper are—

“Recommended by All Reliable Druggists.”

That phrase is a calumny and an unwarranted insult to pharmacy. Reliable druggists do not recommend these good-for-nothing fakeries and fads. They know better. They know that the sole aim of such products is not the performance of a worth-while service, but rather a greedy attempt to separate fools from their moneys.

This is the age of hokum when credulity and ignorance still stalk the land with pride and puffing profits. Yet surely something could be done to prevent copy writers from taking such undue liberties with the good name of a profession which has long served the public usefully, intelligently and with a high sense of ethics and ideals.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For discussion of the paper see Minutes of the Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing in this issue of the JOURNAL and Resolution No. 35—May JOUR. A. PH. A.

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHARMACY.

All the divisions of the American Institute of Pharmacy should be and doubtless will be for service, for that is the life of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.
