

as mineral oil and liquid petrolatum and these likewise increased the physical properties for its carrying capacity for water.

Benzol and xylol of the aromatic group also acted in similar manner, but to lesser intensity.

Trying out experiments with vegetable oils olive and almond, and with lard, produced mixtures which would carry no water whatever and the conclusion is reached that with the employment of the cholesterins for ointment bases, the hydrocarbons *are essential*, for it is to them in combination that this property is imparted.

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE PROPAGANDA.\*

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The subject upon which I have been asked to speak appears upon the program of this meeting as "A System for the Extension of the Propaganda."

To formulate such a system would, I am afraid, entail months of careful thought and practical experiment, and to attempt to do so in the short space of time allotted to me would be folly. The best that I can therefore do is to offer a few suggestions upon which such a system might be founded. The main idea of this propaganda, as I understand it, is to eliminate as far as possible the exploitation among physicians of the products of the specialty houses and introduce in their stead the preparations of the U. S. P. and N. F.

To do this would mean the strenuous cooperation of all the retail drug trade, and the basis of all true cooperation is well directed individual effort, each unit working like a well-oiled piece of machinery for the benefit of the whole.

Each individual must find his place in the plan and do his utmost to extend the knowledge of the U. S. P. and N. F. preparations among the prescribing fraternity and to do this means more than mere talk and getting together schemes. It means active, practical, go ahead work. It means that every pharmacist must give more time and study to improving his own knowledge of the standard preparations, so that he can speak of them as of something he is really intimate with.

In the beginning the pharmacist has himself alone to blame for the present condition of affairs. He has let this, the most important part of his calling, slip from him by his own indifference and lack of true professional knowledge, ability, and pride in his own handiwork.

The physician *cannot* be held responsible. The specialty houses have only filled a place which the pharmacist ought never to have left vacant, and in the great majority of cases the physician has been forced to supply his own and his patients' needs where he best could, largely, I am afraid, to his own, and to the detriment of the drug trade, not to speak of the patient who has to foot the bill and is in the end the greatest sufferer.

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\*Read at the November 21st meeting of the Northwestern Branch at Minneapolis, Minn.

The first step to be taken in the formation of any plan to better the conditions as they now exist, should begin with the training of the young pharmacist. It is for him to take care of the future.

Educate him to the fuller appreciation of the importance of being first a pharmacist in the true meaning of the word. Teach him to realize that with *him* lies the making or marring of what should rank as one of the high professions. Give him every opportunity to become proficient in every branch of his professional work. Help him to become a master in the compounders' art. Were this done and followed up the propaganda would take care of itself and the value of the U. S. P. and N. F. preparations would be recognized by the medical profession, through the men who had been trained and who have given their time and thought to prepare them.

To follow this method would of course take time, but it would be the surest means of attaining a desirable end, and the recognition that apart from a commercial business pharmacy ranks as high upon the professional scale as the practice of medicine itself.

The pharmacist, if he wishes to regain the confidence of the physician, should be able to demonstrate his ability to prepare and furnish by his own work a line of reliable U. S. P. and N. F. preparations or at least be able to guarantee by actual tests the preparations he supplies. He should make the prescription end of his business the most important part of it instead of as sometimes a mere side-line; that is, of course, if he is in favor of this propaganda. If he is not, why not remove his prescription case entirely and leave that work to those who are qualified and willing to undertake it and make it their whole business.

This brings up a point which is quoted in this month's Journal of the A. Ph. A. from the Pacific Drug Review in favor of two different kinds of pharmacies. One to be called the department drug store, where everything that is handled in the modern drug store would still be adhered to except the dispensing of prescriptions and the compounding of medicines for the treatment of disease and sickness. The other to be the real pharmacy in name as well as work; to be run on purely ethical lines and to be specially registered as such, and open to the most rigid inspection. The dispensing of prescriptions and compounding of medicines to be the main issue in such a place and all side lines and sundries to be eliminated except those which are immediately accessory as sick room requisites or physicians' supplies. It is difficult to see why such a plan should not be feasible or possible.

There are many in the drug trade at present who have neither time nor inclination for the necessary exacting and fussy work of the compounder, but whose tastes run more along the broader lines of commerce. Let them therefore develop along the lines of least resistance to their desires and make the most of the many side lines which the present system seems to demand, leaving the purely professional duties to those who like it and could make a success of it, unhampered by commercialism. A system like this would leave the man of professional desire, time for perfecting himself and improving his work. In due course his efforts would bear fruit in the shape of public and medical confidence, with the attendant remuneration for skilled work well done.

Under the conditions recently in vogue any plan for the furtherance of U. S. P. and N. F. propaganda would be most difficult to solve and still more difficult to follow.

There is a lack of unanimity in the drug trade which is not easily overcome. This is due in a great degree to the passive antagonism between the professional and commercial branches of the business. Could the two be reconciled and fused together, something might be found which would prove an easy solution for the problem.

If the druggists could meet and arrange, through committee or otherwise, to prepare or have prepared samples of U. S. P. and N. F. preparations and begin a crusade among physicians to actually demonstrate the superiority of these preparations and supply suitable literature, a measure of success might be attained. To do this would only mean following the plan of the specialty houses in getting in their detail work and keeping at it all the time. No half-hearted methods would have much chance to succeed and the earnest cooperation of every druggist would be necessary to carry the campaign to anything like a successful issue. A good form of literature for distribution among physicians would be an abbreviated N. F. to include some of the U. S. P. preparations; a small edition containing the names of the preparations, with doses and quantities of each active ingredient in a dose, and where the general medicinal properties of each preparation could be seen at a glance. A therapeutic index could be added whereby a number of formulas would be found for each indication. This book could be arranged and compiled by a committee of the Pharmaceutical Association and sent to the druggists who were interested and by them distributed to the physicians in their locality.

Such a scheme as this might help somewhat. Through some such means pharmacy, although losing more and more ground professionally, may recover somewhat her former prestige and by adapting herself she will override many obstacles and mend the breaks occurring in her commercial and technical foundations.

A better understanding between the professions of medicines and pharmacy ought to be striven for and I would urge that both physicians and pharmacists owe to the public not merely the services which they are paid for, but that they owe the service due from superior knowledge to ignorance.

I would reiterate again that the best basis upon which to build a campaign with any great measure of success to follow is the training of the pharmacist of tomorrow in the highest branches of his art and instilling into him the highest ideals. He needs time for this and I would suggest even that a revolution should take place in the method of the present. Shorten the hours of labor and get away from the popular idea that a drug store is a place of public convenience. Why should the druggist of America make himself so cheap, and place himself at the beck and call of all on Sunday? It is not so in other countries and should not be necessary in this, but the druggist is alone to blame—he has made of himself a convenience. His store is open day and night to supply the demands of a too exacting public. Not to fill prescriptions, but to supply the late birds with

their cigars and sodas, etc., a good place to get stamps and information, and the recognized meeting place for those who have a date.

In this way the energies of himself and his staff are sapped and wasted. The midnight oil might be burned to better advantage. The time might be spent in study or if in nothing better than in healthful recreation.

The younger men, were things changed, might better themselves in many ways, becoming not mere department clerks, but proficient professional men.

In European countries the pharmacist has no such conditions to face and why should it be here in this land of freedom.

There the pharmacist can have his business done in an eight or ten-hour day and have his Sundays practically to himself. It only needs a beginning, a regular pull together to make it so here. Cut at the root of the matter and work from the bottom and in time such a propaganda as we are now discussing will become simply a memory. Use it meantime as a stepping stone towards the ideal and realize that there is more in true pharmacy than what we are now getting out of it; there is the professional pride, enthusiasm, mental growth, and inspiration which comes with increase of knowledge, and the broader view of life and its problems which knowledge alone can give.

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#### SUICIDE BY DRINKING A SOLUTION OF SALT.

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An editorial on "Poisoning from Common Salt" (The Journal, Oct. 5, 1912, p. 1297), speaks of the condition as a rare one. I wish to give my experience with several cases of fatal salt poisoning in China.

Throughout Chekiang Province, and probably in other provinces of China, the drinking of a saturated solution of salt is a common mode of committing suicide, and there is none more difficult to treat. In only one case did I succeed in securing recovery. Salt is taken for suicidal purposes sometimes in a common saturated solution made with water as the solvent, and sometimes in the brine from salted kraut.

Poisoning by salt usually presents a picture of high temperature and pulse, purging, vomiting and spasm. In the case in which I was successful in securing favorable results I washed the stomach with 2 quarts of a 1 percent. solution of silver nitrate, using a stomach-tube. The washings were chalky white at the start and were kept up till the solution coming away was just slightly white. Then warm tea was used till the stomach was thoroughly cleansed. Large amounts of tea were taken by mouth and a purge given. The patient was then removed to the hospital and made a good recovery. Although suicide is extremely common in this part of China the use of salt solution is not so common as suicide by other less painful methods. The amounts taken vary with the determination of the person taking it, but usually are from 1 to 3 rice bowlfuls—a pint to a pint and a half.—*Journ. A. M. A.*