

Papers Presented to Local Branches

THE ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL CONGRESS.*

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On September 17, 1913, there assembled at The Hague a notable gathering of those interested in pharmacy in one or the other of its varied occupations at the Kurhaus, Scheveningen. The attendance was larger than usual and of course The Netherlands, Belgium, and nearby countries sent the largest number of delegates. The proceedings were conducted with harmony and were pervaded by a real spirit of internationalism.

A large number of papers on chemical and pharmaceutical subjects were presented, some of which were not read because of lack of time, but the range of the subjects was greater than at any previous Congress. The attendance at the lectures given by Professor Alexander Tschirch, of Berne, on the Enzymes, Professor Emile Bourquelot, of Paris, on the Synthesis of Glucosides by Ferments, and the illustrated lecture by Professor H. P. Wijsman, of Utrecht, on the Drug Cultivation of the Dutch Indies, was most notable. Professor Tschirch's paper was very interesting; he spoke in the German language and occupied nearly an hour and a half in its delivery. Professor Bourquelot's lecture was full of valuable facts derived from his researches on the Glucosides. Both of these lectures will be published soon and will be available for comment. Professor Wijsman's lecture was of a totally different character. He had visited Java and illustrated his subject by lantern slides and cinematograph. Some of the films were beautiful and the whole process of the cultivation, including the stripping, collecting, packing, and every detail was shown with the persons moving about engaged in the various details; it was most impressive and entertaining. It brought home to every hearer operations conducted in far-off countries and one could well imagine that he was on the spot and actually seeing the whole process of the cultivation of Cinchona Bark. Why can we not have in the annual meetings of the American Pharmaceutical Association such an illustrated lecture on some subject of national importance?

Space will not permit a report in detail of the individual papers, but they will be open for publication in this country and our enterprising pharmaceutical journals will doubtless reprint them.

The influence of ferments upon drugs and drug action was one of the scientific features of the Congress. Dr. W. van Dam, of Hoorne, brought up the question of the identity of chymosine with pepsin. Dr. E. Fuld, of Berlin, presented a paper on the same subject, and both reached the conclusion that chymosine and

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pepsin are identical. A proposition was made for the nomination of an international committee to establish an international standard and method of testing pepsin.

Professor E. Perrot presented a paper on the presence of oxydases in vegetable drugs and their influences exerted on the quality of galenical preparations. He stated that enzymes are most active agents in the vital manifestations of living plants. Animal ferments, especially the ferments of animal secretions, were subjects treated by Professor Martin Jacoby, of Berlin, and Dr. E. Gorter, of Leyden. The presence of amylax, pepsin, and tripsin in the animal secretions were specially noted in Professor Jacoby's paper, while Dr. Gorter mentioned lipase, amylase, saccharase, maltase, and lactase with proteolytic and peptolytic ferments.

It will thus be seen that the scientific pharmaceutical world is giving much attention to the action of vegetable and animal enzymes. It is evident that in the future we must look forward to revelations which will greatly affect galenical pharmacy.

In urine analysis there were two papers on the oxalic acid in the organism and the presence in the urine of calcium oxalate. Dr. Viesser advanced the proposition that oxalic acid and oxalates are products of the decomposition of the carbohydrates, mainly sugar, and a statement was made that by giving up the use of sugar in the food oxalates in the urine are reduced. Starch food does not seem to produce an excess of oxalates. Professor Rosenthaler, of Strassburg, presented an interesting paper on pyro-analytical processes. He advocated the use of sublimation upon drugs and galenical preparations with a view of recognizing certain constituents. Of course this method is not practicable on all drugs, but he believes that in many drugs not heretofore analyzed in this way the process would be found valuable.

Physiological testing, particularly for digitalis and strophanthus, was discussed and it was plainly indicated that we are earnestly endeavoring to determine reliable and accurate means of testing drugs physiologically. The discussion concluded with the adoption of the following resolution:

"The second Section of the Eleventh International Congress of Pharmacy, having heard the report of MM. Ginzberg and Meulenhoff, expresses the opinion that the principle of determining the therapeutic value of certain drugs by physiological methods should be adopted whenever the chemical test does not give sufficient indications."

While the scientific work of the Congress was being considered, in sections held simultaneously commercial pharmacy was not neglected. As the official language for most of the sections was French and most of the members spoke in that language, it was evident to delegates from other nations that the French tongue was conducive to volubility and the encouragement of the use of other parts of the body, such as the arms, and the swaying of the body to convince hearers of the value of the speaker's arguments. It was noted that in many cases the speaker failed to address the Chairman, as is the custom in English-speaking countries. There did not seem to be any necessity for members indulging in physical effort and using their biceps to enforce their views, for the French are probably the most polite people in the world; but this habit of ad-

dressing each other is not conducive to the progress of business at any congress and leads to confusion.

It was noticed that in the discussions there was evidently an intention to register objections to continued legislation to control the dispensing of medications and to evade responsibility. The writer, notwithstanding his inability to speak French fluently, sought to impress upon the section the fact that individual responsibility should not be evaded, but that it was one of the greatest assets that the pharmacist had throughout the world. The public have trust and confidence in the pharmacist's judgment and ability and are willing to pay for this. If medicine can be handed down to a customer by an uneducated boy or girl, what is the necessity for a long pharmaceutical training with individual study and the possession of a diploma?

Pharmacopœial Revision occupied much time and thought during this Congress. The establishment of a Pharmacopœial Information Bureau produced much discussion. Professor Tschirch, of Berne, wrote a paper previous to the assembling of the Congress which was widely circulated and in which he proposed that such a Bureau be established. He offered his university at Berne, Switzerland, to aid in its organization and establishment. When the subject was brought before the Congress, it was evident that there was a division of opinion. Brussels was favored by the Belgians and French as the proper place for headquarters; The Hague was also advocated because the Federation Internationale Pharmaceutique was located at this geographical point, and further the Federation had taken active steps in advancing Pharmacopœial work. The objects of an International Bureau are most praiseworthy, the intention being to select a suitable chairman who is familiar with European languages and who will send out to the commissions and committees engaged in pharmacopœial revision a summarized statement of discoveries in tests and notices of adulteration and any information which would be valuable to the pharmacopœias of the world. This will involve some expense and the money needed to carry on such an information bureau must be subscribed for or raised in order to pay the necessary expense. The subject was discussed in section meetings, but because of its importance and the necessity to find the man, the general meeting of the Congress decided to appoint the following representative committee to take the whole subject into consideration:

"The Eleventh International Congress of Pharmacy desires to see continued the work towards the unification of Pharmacopœias so happily inaugurated by the Brussels Conference for the Unification of Heroic Medicines.

"1. Considering that an International Congress is not qualified to give a pronounced opinion as to the work to be done by a similar institution, the second Section asks the general meeting to appoint a commission, to submit within two months an organization scheme to an International Pharmacopœial Bureau.

"2. The scheme elaborated by this Commission will be transmitted to the office of the International Pharmaceutical Federation, which within a month will communicate it for examination to the official Commissions of the Pharmacopœias of the different countries.

"3. The Commission to consist of the following members: Professor A. Tschirch, Vice-president for the Commission of the Swiss Pharmacopœia; Professor E. Bourquelot, member of the Commission for the French Codex; Professor H. Thoms, Berlin; Professor Jorissen, member of the Commission for the Belgian Pharmacopœia; Professor H. G. Greenish, London; Professor Joseph

P. Remington, Philadelphia, Chairman of the Committee of Revision of the United States Pharmacopœia; Professor L. van Itallie, President of the Commission for The Netherlands Pharmacopœia, and President of the International Pharmaceutical Federation."

Among the other propositions with regard to pharmacopœias was one to use Esperanto for Pharmacopœial Nomenclature throughout the world. A lively discussion ensued after the presentation by the author of the paper, M. C. Rousseau, of France. The prevailing opinion seemed to be that while it was very desirable to have an auxiliary Esperanto name, that this language had not progressed sufficiently to warrant its adoption at this time. The proposition was referred to the Federation for action.

An exhibition which was most instructive was held at the Kurhaus, Scheveningen. It was confined solely to pharmaceutical education and scientific apparatus, no proprietary specialties were shown. Photographs of pharmaceutical colleges and schools of Europe, books, and pamphlets were in evidence, and one could have spent hours at the exhibition with much benefit. Historical objects were also shown. Photographic groups of students of various European schools showed clearly that women were taking up pharmacy. The Chemist and Druggist reporter noted this fact in the following language:

"The Bureau was staffed largely by women pharmacists, the languages they spoke being indicated by tiny national flags pinned beneath the broach. The feminist movement in pharmacy in Holland is not a thing of yesterday, but has been working for quite forty years. Most of the pharmacies have women assistants and their intelligence and industry have won for them golden opinions as to the suitability of pharmacy as an employment for women."

Professor P. van der Wielen, of Amsterdam, organized a corps of women assistants who were present at all of the meetings and upon excursions. One of the delegates was informed that they were all desirous of improving their knowledge of English and hence a conversation in English ensued. That the English speaking members appreciated this desire for education goes without saying.

There were only two delegates from the United States present. President Day appointed Joseph P. Remington and Julius A. Koch to attend the Congress and on every occasion they were treated with great hospitality and were accorded every attention by President Professor Dr. L. van Itallie and General Secretary J. J. Hofman.

The entertainments were all of a most lavish and hospitable character. A pleasing fact was the cordial greeting of President Edmund White, of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain to the Americans, and the two English-speaking countries were in accord on all important subjects.

On our way back to America, Professor Koch and the writer were present at the opening meeting of the School of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in London, where we assisted at the presentation of the Hanbury gold medal to Dr. Frederick A. Power, a graduate of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy of the class of 1874.

The delegates from the American Pharmaceutical Association performed their duties in a manner which they hope is acceptable to the members of the American Pharmaceutical Association.