

Scientific Section

Papers Presented at the Sixty-First Annual Convention

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE WORK OF THE SCIENTIFIC SECTION.

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We hear much in the pharmaceutical journals about the "profession" of pharmacy, but where is it? To be sure we have our pharmaceutical colleges and press, pharmacopœias, dispensaries and text-books, and hosts of pharmaceutical students, but it stops right there. Where is that body of professional men engaged in the practice of pharmacy we read about in the journals? Alas it does not exist. The modern pharmacy is a department store with a pharmaceutical annex.

Are we ever to have a profession of pharmacy, that is a body of men working in cooperation with the medical profession as experts in drugs? Are the students who worked for their diplomas ever to have an opportunity of using the knowledge they acquired at college in a practical way? That depends upon the medical profession. At the present time physicians do not prescribe drugs as formerly, and pharmacy, or the art of preparing drugs to meet the demands of the medical profession, languishes. Is that because drugs are useless in the treatment of the sick, or are there other reasons accounting for it?

A graduate of one of our eastern university medical schools recently called on me for advice regarding the use of a bacterial vaccine. He was also a graduate in pharmacy. Moreover, he was a very successful practitioner with a large practice. Speaking from thirty year's experience he said, "I am thankful for my pharmaceutical education. It gave me an insight to drug therapy. Not that I learned how to practice medicine at the college of pharmacy, but I learned about drugs, and how to prepare and dispense them. At the medical school I learned about diseases and how to diagnose them, but I did not learn what drugs to use in their treatment or how to use them. When the medical student graduates he does not know how to write a prescription. That is where the medical schools are weak. Now my pharmaceutical education came into play. I soon found out why the old worthies in the profession used such preparations as Basham's Mixture and Deshler's salve—preparations now considered worthless by some of the would-be medical authorities, so I commenced to use them in the same way, as recommended by the fathers of medicine, and with good results. That is why I have a large practice while many good men who perhaps know more than I do about some things have failed. They did not know how to use the materia medica."

There are thousands of physicians who do not know how to use the materia medica. About all they know about drug therapeutics is what they learn by reading the advertising pages of the medical journals and by listening to the

detail man. I have nothing but praise for the manufacturers who tell the truth in advertising and I compliment the detail man who conveys accurate knowledge to the physician for he is doing good work. But where does the professional pharmacist as an expert in drugs come in? Why does not the pharmacist call on the doctor and give him information concerning the advances in materia medica science? Why leave it all to the detail man? The doctor wants to know about drugs and if the druggist knows enough about them to give the doctor the information he craves, the druggist will always find a hearty welcome when he calls on the doctor.

What the doctor particularly wants to know about drugs is how to use them. I discarded from my correspondence files not long ago five thousand letters representing about four years' correspondence with doctors who wanted to know about drugs, especially in relation to serums, bacterins and tuberculins. Why did the doctors write to me on the subject? Why did they not ask their local druggists about them? You know the answer without my telling you. The local druggist as a rule is not an expert in drugs.

In answering the thousands of questions asked by physicians about drugs, I hardly ever express an opinion of my own. It is my habit to quote authority for all therapeutic statements. I give the doctors full information regarding the untoward effects, limitations, and comparative value of the newer materia medica taken from the reports of competent observers. That is what the doctor wants.

You say you are not competent to give such information. You would have to become competent if you took a position on the detail force of a manufacturing house. Why not read up?

Read up on the subject of immunity and its artificial production for the prevention and cure of disease and learn the difference between serums and bacterial vaccines, and how both are used, then inform your doctors about them.

Read up on drug standarization, then put in a line of standardized products and go and tell your doctor about it. Read up on drug preservation, then place your biologicals in cold storage and tell your doctors why you are doing so. The president of the state board of health in one of the eastern states gave warning to the pharmacists of his state to the effect that unless druggists carried their biological stock in refrigerators, the board of health would make preparations to carry its own stock.

After delivering my lectures on bacterins, serum, and smallpox vaccine two years ago I told the students to stock up with these products when they went into practice and bought their own stores, then go and tell the doctors about them. About a year afterward I met one of the graduates who had recently purchased a store of his own. Said he, "Tell the class for me that the plan is a good one. I tried it and my total sales increased one-third in a month in consequence."

But don't stop with the doctors. Tell their patients what you are doing. I called on a druggist in Scotland to pay my compliments to one of the fraternity some time ago. He was doing the largest business in his city. "How did you get such a fine business," I asked. "I will tell you," he replied. "I have been in the drug business fourteen years, seven in America and seven here in this store. When I purchased the store I informed the doctors and the leading people in the neighborhood that, as a professional pharmacist and expert in

drugs, I would personally guarantee that the medicines dispensed in prescriptions and sold over my counter conform to recognized standards. I also informed them that I would charge accordingly, for standardized medicines cost more than other medicines; and if they wanted cheap drugs not to come to my store for them. I kept hammering away until I educated physicians and their patients to discriminate in favor of standardized products. Standardization is the secret of my success. The future of pharmacy depends upon drug standardization."

Read up on the different preparations of the pharmacopœia and tell the doctors and the people about them. Physicians would prescribe more ointments if you would show them the difference between carefully prepared ointments and those made by careless manipulation. Enlighten people about the difference between properly prepared U. S. P. ointment of rose water and the miscellaneous brands of commercial cold creams.

The time at my disposal will not permit me to tell all of the things you can tell the physicians and the people about the preparations of the Pharmacopœia. Be sure and tell them how the Pharmacopœia itself is prepared so they may realize that it is the product of the concentrated brain work of a committee of high class drug experts representing the entire medical and pharmaceutical professions of the United States.

Then come here to this section and relate your experience. Give us papers with the information written in simple language so the busy physician can readily comprehend it. Get the editor to furnish you some reprints of your paper and send them to the physicians in your neighborhood. If you continue to do that kind of work, giving the doctors the kind of information they want, you will be surprised to see how your business will grow.

Now if a number of you will undertake this kind of work the JOURNAL of the A. Ph. A. will contain many pages of fresh information concerning the materia medica, new and old, and it will not be long before the doctors will commence to subscribe for the JOURNAL. I can conceive of nothing that will do more to popularize the materia medica and decrease therapeutic nihilism than this.

I would therefore move that the chairman appoint a committee of three to formulate a set of queries along the lines of the above suggestions, the list to be published in the JOURNAL sufficiently in advance of the next annual meeting to permit you to study the list to do some original work, and to contribute to the section such information concerning the materia medica of a character suitable for the physician to use as a guide in prescribing. If you will do this I am sure that you will forgive me for reading such a long paper.

AN IMPROVED FORM OF KYMOGRAPH.

PAUL S. PITTINGER, PHAR. D.

The ever increasing number of routine samples sent to the laboratory for physiologic tests, together with the desire to economize space, has induced me to increase the efficiency of the various apparatus employed sufficiently to enable us to handle comparatively large amounts of routine work without interfering markedly with our experimental or research work.