Section on Pharmacopoeias and Formularies

Papers Presented at the Sixtieth Annual Convention

THE U. S. P. AS A STEPPING STONE TO HIGHER IDEALS.

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While I do not pose as a teacher of high ideals, it is my ardent desire, as a common druggist in the ranks, to lend to the advancement of the profession that I love, and to which I have endeavored to give the energies with which God has endowed me, the little influence at my command.

It will be observed at this meeting that the teachers of our schools of pharmacy are the leaders in this Association, as they should be, but it is a lamentable fact that not enough of the men behind the counters of the retail drug stores of the country are interesting themselves in the work of this Association; and for this reason, and not for any fitness I may possess to participate in this discussion today, I have accepted the invitation of the Chairman of your Committee on the United States Pharmacopœia to present a brief paper along any phase of the subject that concerns me most.

I have chosen the above subject as being self-explanatory, as well as affording an opportunity to make my remarks general. And, while there is nothing personal in what I have to say, it matters little to me where I may strike, if I can succeed in pointing out some of the defects which have crept into our profession, and in directing the thought of my colaborers to the U. S. P. as the means of removing such defects.

In my humble opinion, we are at the beginning of better days in pharmacy if we will but hold to the Pharmacopœia as our "rule and guide" for work, instead of shouting "ham sandwiches, hot tamales, oyster cocktails, post cards, postage stamps," and the many other things which degrade our high calling.

If we will but study the needs of the physician, and help him to see the advantage of familiarizing himself with the standard preparations of the U. S. P., and show by our manner of conducting business that we are not mere vendors of patent medicines, soda water, and sandwiches, but are men of his own class professionally, who have at heart the welfare of the sick the same as himself, our increase in prosperity will be both sure and speedy.

Now to show ourselves worthy of this confidence we must, first of all, see to it that the rule and guide by which we work is the very best standard that can be set up, then there can be no question as to our "ideal."

I believe that the U. S. P. could be improved by making some of its formulas more explicit. For example, take that of so simple a preparation as Essence of Peppermint. The average druggist will use the oil of peppermint which he

happens to have in stock, and which is often very inferior in quality; since the druggist when purchasing from his jobber frequently fails to insist upon being supplied with standard U. S. P. drugs only, and buys the cheapest grades offered.

It is true that the pharmacist should know that the oil to be used in the preparation mentioned should be in accordance with pharmacopœial requirements, but he does not stop to think. In this formula, the name of the oil should be followed by the legend "U. S. P." which would cause the conscientious pharmacist to study the label on the container to ascertain whether or not the article was up to the standard. This precautionary method should be used in every formula where there is a possibility of such oversight.

Another example is found in Tannic Acid, which title we believe should always be followed by "U. S. P." in any formula where it occurs. The writer once had an experience in trying to get a good U. S. P. tannin for prescription work. To my amazement neither of the wholesale houses of whom I was accustomed to buy had a pound of it in stock, and when our demands were persistent, they ordered it specially for us. On making investigation, we found that they always sent out the cheaper grades of this article to meet the demands of druggists for low prices.

No man ever attained a very high plane who loafed on his job. That retail druggists all over the country have been doing this goes without saying, and it is demonstrated by the fact that on the shelves of retailers may be found hundreds of dollars worth of pharmaceutical specialties which, in most cases, can be made by the retailer himself after the formulas in the U. S. P. and N. F.

It behooves us, if we are to make our calling successful, and our Pharmacopœia a useful book, to stop loafing, stop going after strange gods in things foreign to our profession, and prove ourselves worthy members of the craft. Then, and not till then, can we compel the pharmaceutical manufacturing houses, who are sapping our vitality both professionally and financially, to "sit up and take notice."

I realize, however, that the pharmaceutical manufacturers may be a useful adjunct to our profession, and can do much for us if they will treat us fairly and stop going into the patent medicine business and promulgating their patents through the physicians. This would give us a great incentive to use the Pharmacopœia faithfully, and strive to improve it in every way possible, so that the volume would grow steadily into that popularity of which it is so deserving.

The writer believes that a more exhaustive description of the properties and medicinal uses of all drugs and formulas in the Pharmacopœia would popularize it immediately, and would lead to a more frequent use of the book among druggists generally. Also, that the publication of these formulas in any other than the official manner should be prohibited, after they are adopted by the Committee of Revision. While it is true that this would make the U. S. P. very much larger and more expensive, it would greatly lessen the demand for other books containing non-official substances and formulas.

We believe, also, that it would make the book more popular with physicians if shorter names were adopted for chemical substances having titles which almost cover a page of a prescription blank, such as "hexamethylenamine tetramine." It would facilitate their being remembered by physicians and many who use this

particular chemical under trade names could soon be induced to employ the official title if it were short, but they do not care to use such needlessly long and difficult names.

Our pharmaceutical manufacturing friends have long realized the importance of this, and are putting out this same chemical under the trade names, "amino-form, cystogen, formin, urotropin," etc., and in many instances are getting not only fancy but fabulous prices for them.

ORIGIN OF SOME WELL-KNOWN MEDICINES.

Dover's powder, introduced into the "British Pharmacopœia" in 1748, was the result of the work of Thomas Dover, who was born in 1668; studied under Sydenham; practiced in Bristol in 1684. During the year of 1708, when Thomas Dover was captaining a privateer expedition, he landed in Peru, and following this his seamen became afflicted with the plague. Together, with four surgeons, he treated 180 seamen by bleeding each man 100 ounces and by using the powder. In 1742, after he had returned to London, he brought out this powder for gout, and it was called by him diaphoretic powder.

"Fowler's Solution," introduced by Tom Fowler, an apothecary, in Yorkshire, England. A proprietary medicine, named "Tasteless Ague and Fever Drops," was quite popular at that time, so Fowler analyzed it and found arsenic in it. He worked out the formula, added spirit of lavender and called the resulting preparation Fowler's Solution.

Laudanum was a name invented by Paracelsus in 1500, who applied it to an aqueous extract of poppy, which he gave in five-grain doses. Sydenham first introduced liquid laudanum, acetum opii, which continues today as the laudanum of the continent. The word paregoric was first used as an adjective, meaning to speak words of comfort, and was first used to describe an elixir. Lemort, a Leyden chemist, brought forth paregoric elixir early in the eighteenth century. Many of the older Greek and Latin physicians had paregoric elixirs.

One of the oldest known combinations is that of Hiera Picra, sometimes referred to as Hickera Pickera, or Hickory Pickory.

Hiera was applied to prescriptions in early Grecian medicine, and these contained either aloes or scammony, or both. Each physician had his own particular Hiera; Galen's consisted of aloes. The pill of aloes and myrrh was first intro duced as Rufus Hiera.

Friar's Balsam, introduced by Fridasor, a friar, first consisted of Balsam of Peru, later benzoin was substituted.

Blaud's pill, introduced by a Frenchman in 1841, consisted of iron sulphate and potassium carbonate.

Citrine ointment made its debut in 1650, and at that time consisted of lead and grease. In 1722 mercury was dissolved in nitric acid and mixed with lard. A Yorkshire physician was responsible for this.

Diachylon, meaning a precipitation of juices, was of importance, from a medico-legal viewpoint, in England, where it was used by the ignorant class to produce abortion. This ointment dates back to the time of Tiberius.—*The Jeffersonian.*