

# THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

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DEPARTMENT.

"More and more educational institutions are establishing their own radio stations and are sending out programs of instruction to the people of their states. Through Station W-B-A-A, on the Campus of Purdue University, the people of Indiana have been informed regarding events of importance occurring on the campus, information on general subjects and information on specific subjects. Fortunately for the School of Pharmacy, fifteen minutes are set aside every week for the use of the staff. This period has become known as "The Apothecary Hour" and each week some member of the staff presents topics that are thought to be interesting to the citizens of the State. The following two radio talks by Professors Lee and Klemme indicate the type of thing that is being done.—C. B. JORDAN, *Editor*.

## FALLACIOUS ADVERTISING.

BY C. J. KLEMME.

No matter where we go, nor what we do, as long as we are in contact with civilization we meet the blessing and curse of organized business, *viz.*, advertising. We are aroused from pleasant thought after listening to a beautiful program on the radio only to hear some zealous radio announcer dinning into our ears the marvelous qualities and virtues of some tooth-paste, mouth wash, gasoline, baby food, effervescent salt, cold remedy, body-building breakfast food, soap, dog food or other article of commerce without the use of which in the immediate future, we will surely suffer unspeakably from decayed teeth, halitosis, a stalled automobile, an undernourished baby, chronic constipation, pneumonia, weak bodies, dull gray clothes or a blemished skin, or the possession of a mangy pup. We see the same things in print, staring at us from the pages of our newspapers or favorite magazines. In the street cars, on the bill boards, on placards and posters we encounter in an endless stream the announcements of things for sale together with the usual ballyhoo. To see and hear these things, many of them as fantastic as the Tales of Baron Munchausen, is as inevitable as eating and sleeping, as unavoidable as death and taxes.

Yet, advertising is absolutely necessary to our economic existence. Without it, the commerce of the world would dwindle to the vanishing point. It is the very breath and pulse of any far-flung business enterprise. If it were not for this constant emanation of facts and fancy which we call advertising, how would John Doe of Podunk know that Richard Roe, Inc., of New York, manufactured in quantity the very article he needs, and how could Richard Roe, Inc., dispose of, at a profit, the products of quantity manufacturing without broadcasting to the world that such and such articles are available?

It is not with genuinely honest advertising that I have any desire to pick a bone, but the fallacious advertising, the misleading, erroneous, deceitful and downright false statements made about articles, some of which are no better than dozens of others of similar kind, some of which are not worth carrying home, and some of which are actually dangerous or detrimental. Those people in professions concerned with the public health, *viz.*, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, etc., probably notice and resent this type of advertising more than anyone else, largely because so many

products for internal use are often misrepresented. And yet there are many other kinds of products offered to the American public along with statements that should make even the most gullible person turn a deaf ear to them. When we see and hear about the fine qualities that can be found in one and only one brand of gasoline, and the advertiser writes or speaks with such force and fervor that one would think he actually believed these things himself, we wonder why, if we use another brand of gasoline, our car *ever* started, not to mention a cold morning. There are good gasolines and good oils, but don't expect a five-year old automobile engine to perform miracles under their influences. That smacks too much of rejuvenation, but the advertisers would have you believe their products will do just such things for our old 1928 Senile Sixes.

The vitamins, so mysterious, so intriguing, so popular, come in for more than their share of abuse. To be sure, these substances are necessary for the normal functioning of life processes, and sadly enough many diets and many foods are lacking in these important food accessories. The general public has been made aware of these facts largely by fanciful items in the tabloids and in the advertisements of certain foods and pharmaceutical products. The chief trouble with such advertisements is that so many of them are extreme exaggerations and the advertisers would have us believe that if we failed to use their own particularly vitamin-rich product, our diets would be seriously impoverished and we would suffer accordingly. On the other hand, some of the powers attributed to various products by virtue of their vitamin content are truly amazing. Colds may be cured magically, pounds and pounds of weight may be added to the body, all sorts of ills and ailments may be prevented and many other startling miracles are alleged to happen under the influence of these vitamin products. Yet there is much truth contained somewhere in these wild claims, so much in fact that we cannot always say that a given claim is actually false. It is simply a fallacious claim; perhaps we may say it is the truth, twisted, stretched and distorted beyond recognition. We have a pronounced example of this in the statement that certain antiseptics have unusual germicidal powers. It may be true that a given antiseptic will kill germs in ten seconds. Undoubtedly, that is a very true statement. But what the advertiser fails completely to mention is the kind of germs which are executed so suddenly, and the conditions under which said execution is carried out. As a matter of fact the poor germs haven't a chance. Let us consider an analogy. The rays of the sun are healthful, beneficial and energy giving. Yet they can be as deadly to us as any machine-gun, perhaps not as *rapidly* fatal as the gun, but none the less sure. A person who might be exposed directly to the sun's rays for a few hours would become so severely sunburned that he could not survive. In our ordinary, everyday life we are protected from this deadly action of sunshine by clothes, trees, buildings and other things. So it is in what we might call the ordinary, everyday life of a germ. Bacteria, like ourselves, are not in the habit of exposing themselves unduly, and they find their best living conditions in the microscopic crevices and abrasions of the tissues where they are snug and safe from the terrors of their "Aunty Septic." On the other hand, if we put these bacteria in a test-tube and subject them to the direct action of the antiseptic to be tested, it is no wonder they curl up and die in ten seconds. The test-tube becomes their execution chamber in which they have no protection, but let the same antiseptic be used on the tissues,

for example in the mouth, and immediately after its use a bacteriologist could demonstrate the very real and actual presence of bacteria, as full of life and kicking as strongly as ever. Thus we find that the behavior of an antiseptic is far different when applied to tissues than when it is turned loose on some poor, helpless bacteria in a test-tube, and when an advertiser claims that his antiseptic will kill germs in ten seconds, he is telling you the unsullied truth, oh quite the truth, but as the Queen of Sheba said: "The half has never yet been told!"

For the past six or seven years the public has been made hyperconscious of the dangers of acidity and the benefits of alkalinity. Like the abuse of the vitamins, there are truths in what is said about acidity and alkalinity but some of them are carried too far.

It is true that the blood and tissues of the body have a definite alkalinity and this alkalinity must be maintained within very narrow limits in order for life to exist. We have in the body what is known as the alkali reserve, and, if this reserve is well built up, the body is more resistant to common infections. This fact has been the basis for a great deal of advertising on alkalinity and many products are claimed to increase the alkalinity of the body. Actually, many of them do nothing of the kind. One ailment we hear and read so much about in various advertisements is the acidity of the stomach. This or that product is recommended to be taken in the case of hyperacidity of the stomach. Curiously enough, we may have a condition which appears very much like hyperacidity but is actually due to a lack of the normal amount of acid that should be present in the stomach. Under this condition rapid fermentation takes place, producing organic acids which give this sensation of hyperacidity. In such instances the use of alkaline salts to combat the acidity is probably the worst thing that could be done. One should not continually use such alkaline salts to combat stomach disorders over a long period of time unless it be on the advice of competent medical authority, because the condition may be a serious, chronic disorder which demands medical attention.

In a way one cannot criticize manufacturers for employing these extreme measures to convince the public that their products are the best on the market, especially when their products have keen competition. Nevertheless, one should use common sense and exercise perhaps a good deal of skepticism when he reads or hears some of the claims that are made.

Thus far the advertising which we have considered is for the most part quite harmless and, while most of the statements may be true, they are merely distorted truths and very little in the way of actually false statements may be found. The truly vicious and deceitful type of advertising is largely found in connection with what we might call "cure-all" medicines. These are generally patent medicines or those of which the manufacturer keeps the formula a profound secret. Usually we find such remedies advertised as being sure cures for headaches, stomach trouble, liver disorders and all kinds of complaints. As a general rule, we might say that the greater the claims for these remedies, the more they should be avoided.

The question naturally arises as to how one may separate the wheat from the chaff in the advertisements that we see and hear. If you are in doubt as to the validity of an advertising statement, consult some one who is an expert in the field of the product about which you are interested. If the product is sold in a drug store, consult your local druggist, and I am sure that he will give you the most

honest information that is available about the product concerned. When it is a question as to the use of some medicine or various remedies, consult your physician. He is a highly trained specialist in this field and his advice is the best that you can obtain.

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## PHARMACY THROUGH THE AGES.

BY C. O. LEE.

### HERBALISTS AND THEIR HERBS.

Modern medical practice is much less dependent upon crude drugs and their preparations than that of generations past. It is interesting to note, however, the importance of vegetable and animal drugs in ancient *materia medica*. This is a story about ancient herbalists and their medicines.

### HERB DOCTORS IN OUR DAY.

During the first decade of the present century I served my druggist's apprenticeship in a drug store in a small town in southeast Kansas. In the town there lived an old Indian Herb Doctor. At least he was known as a doctor, and claimed to be part Indian and to know something about Indian herbs and medicines.

He used to spend a day, now and then, in the woods gathering herbs. These he used, presumably, in preparing his famous tonic which he sold in the mining towns of that region.

The old doctor came to our drug store and made small purchases of a few things which could not be found in the woods. He was an interesting character. His hair was long enough to fall leisurely about his stooped shoulders from beneath a broad brimmed hat. He was not much of a conversationalist but was interesting when he talked. His remarks were often critical and pessimistic, yet he was, on the whole, rather philosophical.

He had a shed for a laboratory and a medicine wagon, properly decorated, for his sales excursions. The old doctor was not well known to his neighbors; he revealed no medical secrets and minded his own business.

This story is not, I am sure, an unusual one but it is an example of the secrecy and mystery which so often surrounds makers and sellers of strange medicines. It shows, I think, that certain herbal systems appeal to those anxious folks who never cease to be concerned about their ailments, whether real or imaginary. It has always been so and will continue to be for many generations yet to come.

### FAITH IN HERBS.

We will never know who were the first to use plants and herbs as medicines. Neither are we sure that herbs were first used for purposes of curing diseases or whether they were used to discourage evil spirits or demons presumably responsible for the afflictions of mankind. At any rate plants have been used by all primitive peoples, so far as we know, for healing the sick and for purposes of poisoning enemies. Many plants are poisonous when taken in amounts larger than medicinal doses.

The savage learned all of this by many sad experiences, no doubt, and made