

# EDITORIAL

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## SOME EPOCHS OF PHARMACY.

"SOME Epochs in Medical Science" was the subject of an important contribution to the program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Atlantic City, by Dr. W. M. Stanley of Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.

The Glycerin Producers' Association is celebrating the anniversary of Scheele's discovery of glycerin, a very worthy tribute to the discoverer of a product which has many uses, but this is only one of Scheele's many discoveries which have contributed to the industries, arts and professional services.

In a radio address, about five years ago, Dr. Howard W. Haggard said, in part—The trust of Scheele's neighbors "was a sincere tribute to the pharmacist—for it was solely as a pharmacist that these people knew him. They did not recognize that he was a man destined to become a world figure in science. Nor was such fame sought by Carl Scheele; his life was devoted to pharmacy and service to his community." He refused a place on a University faculty, because he feared that the acceptance would interfere with his research. The address is quoted further in the following: "In his spare time, the moments when there were no prescriptions to fill, when there was no one to seek his service, and the lights of his modest pharmacy were dimmed for the night, he worked to satisfy his own insatiable curiosity concerning the materials with which he dealt." Observation, experimentation and sacrificing devotion gained for him surpassing eminence and pharmacists should never overlook the opportunity of having part in the work of their co-workers, without a purpose to take from the industries a share in the honors of achievement by pharmacists.

An article on Pasteur is quoted in the following: "Louis Pasteur revolutionized medicine by discovering and proving the germ theory of disease. It might be asserted with reason that Pasteur did more for mankind than any other one man." Other discoveries were referred to and rightly so, but it is not mentioned that Pasteur was Assistant Professor at the Strasbourg School of Pharmacy, that he was assistant in Balard's laboratory, that he won a prize of the Societé de Pharmacie de Paris, half of which he devoted to purchasing certain necessary apparatus with which he carried on further investigations.

The article referred to Sir J. Y. Simpson and his discovery of the efficacy of chloroform in surgery and the use of ether, but it is not mentioned that a large part of the work was carried on in a British Pharmacy; the discoveries of Morton and Long are spoken of, but it is not stated that without the persistent efforts and loyalty of a pharmacist to his preceptor, an apprentice in the "drug shop" of Dr. C. W. Long, the recognition to the latter would not have been given.

T. H. Huxley was ever ready to speak of the pharmacists' part in the development of materia medica and his early experience in a pharmacy.

The pharmacy prize to Group II was given for a Cinchona display, in which Caventou and Pelletier had an outstanding part and the research was carried on in their pharmacy.

Because the researches of our present-day pharmacists are so near, we do not look upon them as outstanding, but some of the results will be so reported in later years, and unless we keep them in mind and lay claims for pharmacy, credit will be given to other divisions of research. Pharmacy has its epochs and pharmacists have duties in higher conceptions and responsibilities. Liberty is taken in referring to page 963 of the November JOURNAL.

A NOTE FROM THE U. S. P. ON THE ASSAY FOR CALCIUM IN BLOOD SERUM.\*

UNDER *Solution of Parathyroid* of the Pharmacopœia, page 216, an assay is provided to indicate the potency of the Solution. Certain details are supplied under the assay, the latter being dependent upon the increase of the calcium content of the blood serum of dogs into which the Solution has been injected.

Standards have been established but it was not considered necessary when the monograph was prepared to incorporate the exact technique for determining the quantity of calcium in the blood of the test animal. It has been pointed out, however, that various methods for making this determination have been used and that for uniformity in both the standardization of the official product and in the subsequent estimation of its potency, it is important to employ the same procedure.

For this reason the Sub-Committee on Biological Assays, of which Dr. C. W. Edmunds is Chairman, has prepared the details of an assay suitable for pharmacopœial adoption. It is proposed that this assay, or something very similar to it, be introduced into the Pharmacopœial text in one of the future Supplements. In the meanwhile, it is being placed in the pharmaceutical literature so that it may be available for users of the Pharmacopœia in making this determination.

It is hoped that the detailed procedure will be tried by many laboratories and its efficiency thoroughly demonstrated before it becomes official. Those who try this test are invited to correspond with the Chairman of the Committee of Revision, indicating the results obtained.—E. FULLERTON COOK, *Chairman*, U. S. P. Committee of Revision.

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OPIUM CONTROL.

*The system of international control over narcotic drugs which the United States has advocated and supported for many years is threatened by the menace of opium in the Far East, according to a report by Frederick T. Merrill, published by the Foreign Policy Association.*

The report declares that China's latest antiopium campaign has reached its most sensational stage with the threatened execution of hundreds of drug addicts and peddlers, but it points out that the effectiveness of the Nanking government's opium drive has not yet been demonstrated by action on the entire program. The United States, according to Mr. Merrill, is especially concerned by evidence tending to show that increasing amounts of drugs seized on the Pacific Coast originate in the Orient. . . .

The report concludes that "the success of China's latest efforts to combat the opium problem, which are embodied in the 'six-year plan' for the suppression of opium, is dependent on the Nanking government's ability to enforce its laws in general, its willingness to enforce the opium regulations in particular, its progress in re-orienting its agricultural economy away from opium, and its readiness to eliminate opium revenue as a source of public and private income. Only a partial advance has been made, but apparently the central government is increasingly sincere in its efforts to eradicate opium. . . ."

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\* See page 259.