

## A PLEA FOR THE COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF STATE ASSOCIATION PROCEEDINGS.

BY EDWARD KREMERS.

In 1923 the then Chairman of the Section on Historical Pharmacy of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION planned a history of pharmacy in the United States.<sup>1</sup> He appointed thirteen chairmen of as many committees who, with such fellow committee men as they could induce to coöperate, were to write as many chapters of the history of our calling. A year later several chapters were handed in which, if I am correctly informed, are buried somewhere in the archives of the ASSOCIATION. After another year the Chairman whose committee was to prepare a history of our state associations complained that he could not induce the secretaries of our state organizations to coöperate. He had sent out a questionnaire but in most instances had not even received a reply. Far be it from me to blame the secretaries. Not only do I not believe in questionnaires, with very few possible exceptions, but I am certain that history, not even of that of our state associations will ever be written by preparing a summary of answers to a hundred questionnaires.

But, in coming before you, I do want to make a plea for the history of pharmacy in general and that of our state associations in particular. During the past few years, a number of golden anniversaries have been celebrated by state associations. More will be celebrated in the next few years. It is all well and good to publish an anniversary number even with golden letters, but something much more important is necessary if ever the history of state pharmaceutical associations is to be written by a competent historian some time in the future.

The first step in this direction should be taken by the secretaries of our state associations by developing in themselves a sense of responsibility for the preservation of organization documents, even if an historical sense is out of the question for the most part. I have reference particularly to the preservation of sets of proceedings of each state association. One would suppose that each secretary would regard this as one of his foremost duties. Yet such, I am sorry to state, is apparently not the case.

Inasmuch as changes occur in the office of secretary, the official of a given year may well blame his predecessor, and he in turn the one who preceeded him in office. This is pointed out not as an excuse but as an ameliorating circumstance. The situation having been what it was, the libraries of educational institutions, and occasionally other libraries, have stepped in to fill the breach. But this has been anything but a universal practice.

For a long lifetime the writer has made it his duty not only to secure complete sets of the Wisconsin Proceedings for the "General University Library," also for the "Frederick B. Power Pharmaceutical Library," the departmental library of duplicates, but he has made many efforts to secure the proceedings of other state associations. In this he has enjoyed the coöperation of staff members of the University Library. That they have been successful in a small measure is very gratifying and I herewith desire to thank all state association secretaries, past as well as

<sup>1</sup> JOUR. A. PH. A., 12, 183 (1923); 13, 69 (1924).

present, for their support. By way of illustration, permit me to report an experience or two. A number of years ago, a professor of pharmacy of a western university came to Wisconsin for a Summer Session. He had planned to spend one-half of his time in my laboratory and the other half in one of the chemical laboratories. It so happened that the first week of the Summer Session coincided with State Association week. So, after I had gotten him started on his problem, I suggested that he acquaint himself with the literature and spend several half days in the library while I was attending the annual meeting. He did. What is more, he spent the entire Summer Session in the library. Never before did he have such an opportunity to get first-hand information about the subject he was teaching. You may rest assured that I did not discourage him. During the next Summer Session he returned. The pharmacy professor of another institution spent a day in the city. After an hour spent together at luncheon, the three of us stepped over to the University Library across the street from the Club. While in the pharmacy stack, the resident professor told his migrating colleague how he had enjoyed the library facilities during the previous summer. "Why," he said, "I can find more here about my own state than in our own library." When we left, the other colleague remarked: "For years I have been wanting to do a certain piece of work. Now I know where to come to do it."

All of this is very gratifying, but it is only a part of my story. So far as state association proceedings are concerned our files are now relatively not as complete as they were then. During the past year the Assistant Librarian in charge of binding suggested that we make another effort to complete sets so that the annual brochures might be bound into volumes for greater safety and permanence. I was only too glad to promise my coöperation. I drafted a circular letter, a copy of which was sent to every association secretary. The Assistant Librarian added the list of proceedings wanted to complete our files.

Again, I want to thank those who coöperated. To the 48 personal letters sent out, seventeen replies were received. The net results were some twenty-five numbers of proceedings out of several hundred required to complete the sets. A rather poor showing. More discouraging, however, than the net results, is the apparent indifference on the part of most secretaries.

While the presidency of our state associations is occupied by a new incumbent almost every year, the secretary—even if he does not continue in office for a lifetime—is the relatively permanent officer of the organization. It should be his duty to act as archivist of all documents. Yet even of those who replied not a few reported that the secretary's office did not have a complete set of their own Proceedings. How a secretary can perform his duty in a satisfactory manner without a complete set of his own proceedings is beyond my comprehension. However, I am here not to tell you how to perform your secretarial duties, but to make a plea for the future historian of American pharmacy. As previously stated, it is perfectly proper for secretaries to get out anniversary numbers with gold letters or even with an entire gilt cover. But a collection of portraits of members, no matter how desirable, and the eulogistic remarks and reminiscences that are as common as proper on such occasions, are not history. Even the carefully collected newspaper clippings laboriously brought together as shown at the Madison meeting of the A. PH. A. is not history, convenient as such a compilation will prove to the future

historian. We need critical papers based on documentary evidence not hearsay. These preliminary contributions cannot be prepared without complete sets of proceedings. It is for the preservation of these that I plead first of all. You, gentlemen, are duty bound to see to it that your respective state libraries are provided with such sets.

Lest my account seem pessimistic, permit me to close with a quotation from a letter received from the secretary of the Texas Pharmaceutical Association:

"A few years ago we attempted to get a complete file copy for ourselves and we were fortunate enough to locate some of these in your Library and some in Lloyd's Library at Cincinnati. We had typewritten copies made of these missing numbers and we hope some day to find the funds to have them reprinted. If this is ever done you may be sure that we will supply your library with a copy of the same as we feel deeply indebted to you for the service which you rendered us in this matter.

"We now have a complete copy of the Proceedings of each meeting or a newspaper account of the same. It is my opinion that probably one or two of the earlier meetings did not have a printed Proceedings and I resorted to old newspaper files for such information as I could get. I also was fortunate enough to secure photographs of all past-presidents and past-secretaries covering over 56 years. Very little of these records were in the files of the ASSOCIATION when I took hold of them thirteen years ago."

What Mr. Adams has done, each and every one of you can do if necessary. Far from being a pessimist, the very fact that I, a septuagenarian who soon must cease to do work of any kind, have asked for permission to make this plea to your body, must reveal to you that I am an optimist. Personally, I prefer to be neither pessimist nor optimist, but realist. So please see to it that what may seem visionary to many of you may become real.

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## PHARMACY IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY.\*

BY E. G. SWANN.<sup>1</sup>

In the organization of every Navy ship there is a Medical Department and one of the units in this department is a dispensary, occupying a special compartment or room provided in the original construction plans of the ship. The built-in fixtures in this room consist of a prescription counter and cabinet, sink with hot and cold running distilled water, desk, file cabinet, narcotic and poison locker, book racks, shelves and bottle racks. The equipment consists of a prescription balance, sterilizer, refrigerator, electric hot plate, mortars and pestles, pill tile, shelf bottles, graduates and many minor items of equipment required in compounding and dispensing. The dispensary is stocked with all items of medical supplies listed on the Naval Medical Supply Table. The pharmaceutical library consists of a copy of each of the latest editions of the United States Pharmacopœia, the National Formulary, the Pharmaceutical Recipe Book, the United States Dispensatory, a textbook on the "Principles of Pharmacy" and a textbook on "General Chemistry." In addition there are available to all the Hospital Corps men the books and journals

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\* Read before City of Washington Branch, A. Ph. A., May 19, 1937.

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