

THE SQUIBB ANCIENT PHARMACY.

PHARMACY IN RETROSPECT. I.*

BY GEORGE URDANG¹ AND F. W. NITARDY.²

History of mankind is important to all of us; it is instructive, entertaining and frequently inspiring. Its value is augmented and its teaching illustrated by the concrete objects which have escaped the destructive influence of time. The history of Pharmacy, one phase of man's activity, is particularly important to pharmacists and practitioners of related professions. Here, too, the history is similarly enriched, in fact there is scarcely another profession whose past offers so many interesting items and mementos of old and of newer times. Here, indeed, the past is not dead; on the contrary, where such priceless heritages have been properly assembled, arranged and housed, we may say that the past lives with us to-day in all its ancient glory, charm and mystery.

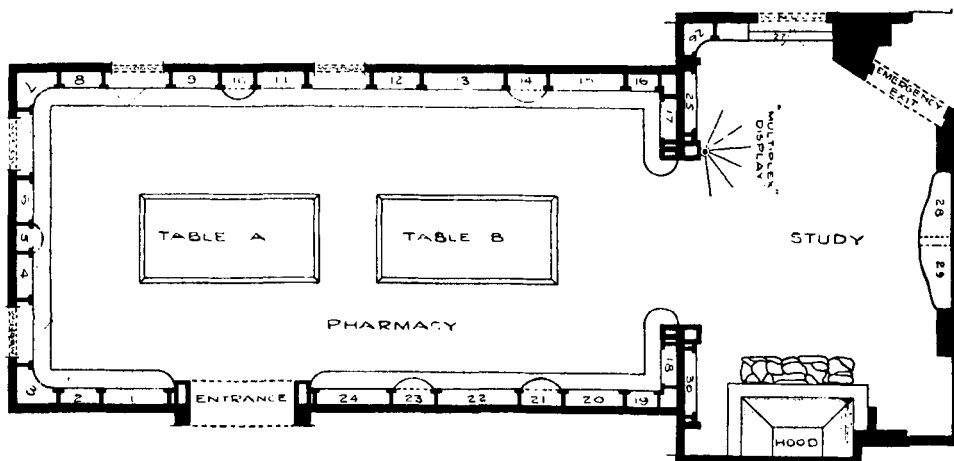


Fig. 1.—Floor Plan.

The applied arts through the ages found an amazingly large domain in the applied science of Pharmacy, thus adding beauty to usefulness and charm to its mystery; this helped to make pharmaceutical books, documents, containers, utensils and even fixtures reverently preserved relics, as well as favored subjects of collection, at least since about the second half of the 19th century.

Dr. J. A. Haefliger of Basle in his excellent book "Pharmazeutische Altertums-kunde" *i. e.*, "Pharmaceutical Antiquarianism"³ gives a "list of collections containing pharmaceutical antiquities" which he calls incomplete but which nevertheless includes, on 13 pages, about 250 public and private collections. In that list we find the present Squibb collection, which was formerly that of Dr. Jo Mayer

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¹ 257 Langdon St., Madison, Wis.

² Vice-President in charge of manufacturing, E. R. Squibb & Sons.

³ Zuerich, 1931, Buchdruckerie zur alten Universitaet.

of Wiesbaden, with the distinguishing statement: "The most important private collection in Germany." This important collection of pharmaceutical antiquities, which because of its completeness and wide variety is to a certain extent unique even in Europe, where most of such collections are found, was secured for American Pharmacy by E. R. Squibb & Sons in 1932 and is now an attraction in New York.

In view of the contribution to the history of Pharmacy represented by the



Fig. 2.—Pharmacy looking toward the Study.

Squibb Ancient Pharmacy, it seemed fitting to us, especially as no reasonably full description of this splendid collection has appeared in print in this country,⁴ to prepare a series of short articles, dealing with it and several important groups therein.

Fully recognizing that such a collection to be a unit, rather than an accumula-

⁴ A description was published in German in the *Pharmazeutische Zeitung* through a series of six articles by Dr. Fritz Ferchl in 1930 (Vol. 75, No. 2, 3, 14, 20, 32, 50). Dr. Chas. H. LaWall also wrote a series of papers on specific subjects involving this collection, one of which appeared in the A. PH. A. JOURNAL in June 1934 and three of which appeared in the *Journal of Chemical Education* during the same year. He also read a paper before the Historical Section of the A. PH. A. in 1934, which quite fully described the collection; however, that paper has not been published.



Fig. 3.—Pharmacy, looking toward the Mortar Section.



Fig. 4.—Closer view of pharmacy fixtures with majolica on shelves.

tion of items, has to be presented in an adequate and well-planned frame, E. R. Squibb & Sons created just such a frame, as will be evident from the following description of the rooms (Fig. 1—floor plan) of the "Ancient Pharmacy" which have been designed and constructed to blend harmoniously with the baroque style of the fixtures, and which quite successfully preserve the atmosphere of the ancient pharmacy.



Fig. 5.—Corner in the Study.



Fig. 6.—Shelves in Study.

To-day, as in days of old, the professional pharmacist uses mainly two rooms in the conduct of his business; one room for immediate contact with his customers, is the pharmacy as the layman sees it; the other room serves as his laboratory, workshop and study.

The "Ancient Pharmacy" likewise consists of two rooms: the "pharmacy" (Figs. 2, 3 and 4) devoted primarily to the display of shelfware and mortars, and the "study" (Figs. 5 and 6).

Most of the baroque fixtures of the pharmacy had, in the eighteenth century, been part of the old "Meunster Apotheke" of Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany). On its shelves rest the mortars, drug jars and bottles; and in the lower section are drawers once filled with the drugs, their nature now indicated by the inscriptions on the labels. The cherubs, on the upper ledge, belong to the old equipment, as does also the "Apotheke" sign.

Of early origin (about 1750) are also the stained glass windows with their wrought-iron frames and colorful painted glass insets of the various Hessian-Nassau coats of arms. The four chairs in the "pharmacy" are of the same period.

The ceiling, with its huge beams and colorful decorative painting, is adapted from authentic illustrations of rooms of that period. The lighting fixtures are new but suggest oil lamps rather than modern electric lights.

To complete the illusion of antiquity, the floor of both rooms is laid with old oak planks.

Of the furnishings of the "study," the table (Fig. 6) and the chairs (Fig. 7), the baroque consoles flanking the table, the lamps and the lanterns, are all parts of the old collection. The fireplace with its hood (Fig. 8) and the massive doors of the study are authentically fashioned according to the old patterns.

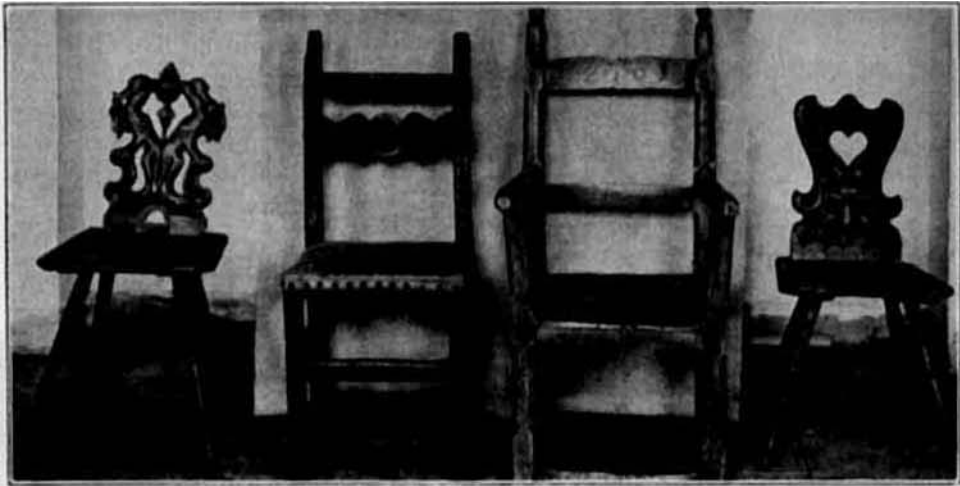


Fig. 7.—Chairs.

The difficult question of how to arrange the majolica ware is solved in a new and, in our opinion most instructive, manner. The many and very representative majolica jars are placed according to their period and style, which usually is closely related to the place of manufacture. Thus one may, so to speak, journey over the shelves from Faenza, Florence and Siena to Genoa, Savona, Milan, etc., crossing the Alps to Switzerland, and on to France, to Holland and finally to Germany.

The mortars are arranged more with regard to the period and style they represent than to the countries or places of origin. The books are exhibited in two large table cases of the pharmacy, also in a special bookcorner in the study. In the study we also find most of the apparatus and utensils, those used in connection with fire are on or around the fireplace. The glass and wood containers, relatively uniform in appearance, are not grouped into special classifications. The portraits, engravings and illustrations, as far as they do not adorn the walls, are arranged on a special display rack.

The stuffed animals (Fig. 6) adorning the walls were in old times more than a decoration of the shop. Crocodiles, lizards, tortoises, sharks, etc., or at least



Fig. 8.—Fireplace in the Study.

There are on the market drug products in liquid form designated as "Ovarian Extract" or by some similar title. In some instances these products have been found not to contain the known therapeutically and physiologically active constituents of ovary, namely, those having estrogenic and progestational activities. The Food and Drug Administration is of the opinion that such inert or essentially inert preparations when sold as "Ovarian Extract," or under any other designation or under labeling which states or implies that such active principles are present, are both adulterated and misbranded as those terms are defined in the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, according to W. C. Campbell, Chief, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

parts of them, were used as remedies in themselves, and people seeing their stuffed forms in the pharmacy were thereby convinced that they indeed received the rare drugs secured therefrom and no substitutes. Even the poor Mantuan apothecary shop which Shakespeare mentions in "Romeo and Juliet," contained such animals:

"And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
"An alligator stuffed,
and other skins of ill-shaped fishes."

RESEARCH AWARD.

Mr. Harold S. Feldman, B.S., 1939 honor student and graduate at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, has been appointed National Formulary Fellow in Pharmacognosy for the session of 1939-1940, under a research grant from the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

The first drug to be taken up for study is Chionanthus. The usual survey of the general description, the structure and the diagnostic elements of the powder will be made; also careful study will be made of the extractive material, especially with reference to the saponin content. It is expected that studies will be made on other drugs during the College session.