

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The alcoholic preparations of the Pharmacopœia,—fluidextracts, tinctures, spirits, etc., should have the alcohol-content of the finished product stated definitely, and so adjusted that reasonably close adherence to the process would be followed.

There seems to be a tendency to complicate and increase the work in many formulas, without any apparent equivalent gain in the results obtained, for example: Liq. Calcis, Liq. Cresolis Co., Liq. Magnesii Citratis, Spt. Menth. Pip, etc.

In closing, I wish to state that the revision of the preparations—and this may also be found true of the other parts of the book—seem too much “library-made” and not enough “laboratory-made.” A thorough and practical revision could be made if the country’s most expert talent could be utilized, at times to suit the individual convenience, during the *interim* of the decennial conventions, as workers in laboratories especially arranged for this purpose, housed by the A. Ph. A. Such laboratories should be located in or near some centrally situated metropolis. In such laboratories tests and processes of great value to the profession, could be worked out, to meet conditions of environment similar to those surrounding the pharmacists of the different sections of the country.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE LAWS OTHER THAN PHARMACY LAWS
WHICH AFFECT THE RETAIL DRUGGIST.*

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The present era will probably be looked back upon by future historians as the “age of laws.” Many laws are now upon our national and state statute books, which class as crimes, acts which in a former generation were looked upon as simply evidences of sharp business practice. These offences, now punishable by law, have been aptly termed “artificial crimes,” because many of them are so technical in their character as to attach no moral disgrace to the individual found guilty of committing them.

The necessity for such laws has arisen on account of the complex relations brought about by our modern civilization, and in order to protect the honest, conscientious and upright individual from unjust and unfair competition on the part of those who are accustomed to look upon business from the standpoint of the old maxim “*Caveat emptor*,” and who do not realize that it has been superseded by the modern maxim “*Caveat vendor*.”

In many instances fraudulent practices have been developed to such a high degree of perfection, that the buyer is no longer able to act as a competent judge of what he is getting without the aid of expert advice. It is true in some cases these laws work an even greater hardship upon those whom they are designed to protect, than upon those whom they are calculated to punish, but that they

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have become necessary, to a certain degree, at least, no one will deny, and their elimination will likely be brought about, only by the education of the individual to a point, where universal compliance with the underlying principles will voluntarily exist, through a proper understanding of the necessities of the situation.

All of these laws are mandatory in the highest degree. Wilful violation or guilty knowledge are not necessary to be proven in order to convict an offender. A proof of the violation carries with it a conviction, however innocently the violation may have occurred. The pharmacist in this respect is like the "Jungle Dweller," whose code of laws has been so admirably outlined by Kipling in the poem which concludes thus:

"Now these are the laws of the jungle,
And many and mighty are they;
But the head and the hoof of the law,
And the haunch and the hump is—Obey."

Of the pharmacy laws themselves, I shall assume that the pharmacist has sufficient knowledge, although in this connection there still exist some evidences of carelessness or wilful disregard of requirements which call for correction. I refer here more particularly to the practice of using substances for official or medicinal purposes which are labeled "For technical use only." This over-worked phrase has been a haven of refuge for manufacturers and sellers of sub-standard products, and unfortunately it is too frequently taken to mean that the article is up to the official standard in all but some minor particular, and the warning is forgotten or disregarded. An example of this kind which has come under my observation recently is of powdered magnesium carbonate supplied on an order for "Powdered Magnesium Carbonate, U. S. P." The package received was marked "Magnesium Carbonate, for Technical Use," and examination showed it to contain so much calcium carbonate, as to practically unfit it for any but filtering purposes.

Another case of the same kind, seen a year or so ago, was of gelatin marked "For Technical Use," and containing an amount of arsenic prohibitory to its use in medicinal or food products.

There is one class of products handled by druggists, for which, at the present time, there are no laws to govern the quality. This is the class of toilet preparations, such as soaps, washes, perfumes, creams, etc., for which no remedial properties are claimed and which come therefore neither under the classification of foods or drugs.

Among the Pennsylvania laws which might affect pharmacists is the general food law which prohibits adulterations and misbranding of foods generally. Maraschino cherries, for instance, which are very frequently used at the soda fountain and which are sometimes sold in the original containers, often contain sulphur dioxide compounds, resulting from the preliminary bleaching to which the cherries are subjected before dyeing them the bright red color. The national law permits the presence of sulphur dioxide if properly declared. The Pennsylvania state law prohibits it under all circumstances, except in dried fruits and molasses where the amount is limited. Such food products, therefore (other

than dried fruits and molasses in which limited quantities of sulphur dioxide are permitted when plainly declared), as are labelled to the effect that they contain sulphur dioxide, are illegal for sale or use in Pennsylvania.

Under the general food act also, would be included cake colored yellow with coal tar color, in imitation of eggs, or orange, or lemon, as the case might be; cake being frequently served at the soda counters of some of the larger stores. Under the general food act, also, would come instances of adulteration of confectionery. Adulteration in this connection need not take the form of the addition of harmful substances. The sale, for chocolate candy, of a confection containing other fats, such as cocoanut fat, which is commonly used to keep the confectionery from softening in hot weather and to cheapen it as well, is a violation of this law which is frequently detected and punished.

The sale, for licorice candy, of a product containing a minimum of licorice or none at all, but flavored with aniseed and colored with carbon black, is another example of a frequent violation of the food law. That the manufacturers know this, is shown by the fact that such goods are never labeled nor billed as the pure article, and thus the guarantee is of no value to the seller. The minimum fine for violation of the food act is \$60 and costs.

The milk and cream act, is one also which the pharmacist might easily violate, as he uses milk as an ingredient of the numerous and popular egg drinks. Milk, to be legal in Pennsylvania, must be whole milk, unskimmed and without the addition of water or any other substance, and containing not less than 3.25 percent of butter fat and 12 percent of milk solids. The use of skimmed milk, where milk is called for, is a distinct violation of the law punishable by a minimum fine of \$25. Under this same act also comes cream, which to be legal must contain not less than 18 percent of butter fat.

When a customer asks for vanilla-cream soda-water, how often is cream used in its preparation? Yet the use of any other substance than full-strength cream, is a distinct violation of the law. The use of milk or of artificially thickened products or of evaporated milk under such circumstances is a violation in each instance, punishable with the infliction of the penalty mentioned above.

Another, and a separate act, prohibits the use of any preservatives or coloring matter whatsoever in milk or cream. The minimum penalty for this offense is \$50. Thus, milk which had been skimmed and then thickened and colored or preserved, would be a violation of two separate and distinct acts, each carrying a separate penalty.

The non-alcoholic drinks act, is the next one which particularly concerns the pharmacist. In this act (which covers soda-water and all other similar beverages, either served by the glass or in bottles), a large number of preservatives are prohibited by name. Benzoic acid and benzoates are not in this list of prohibited preservatives and are the only preservatives in common use not specifically mentioned. Coal-tar colors are not prohibited under this act.

The strict interpretation of this act requires all beverages which are artificially colored and flavored, and which are not sold under distinctive names, to be declared as to their character. Thus, orangeade or lemonade, if artificially colored, must be declared as such, to the consumer. How this can be done with an un-

labeled drink sold by the glass and not drawn from any special kind of a cooling urn, upon which the lettering can be placed, is a problem. The use of placards hung up prominently or a notice accompanying the printed or stenciled list of beverages, such as frequently used, would seem to be the most efficacious method of accomplishing the result.

The penalty for violating the non-alcoholic drink act is also a minimum fine of \$25, as under the milk and cream act.

The ice cream act is the next under which the pharmacist may be liable. Ice cream must not contain any preservatives, must be true to name and must contain not less than 8 percent of butter fat, except in fruit and nut flavors, where 6 percent is required. Artificial colors are not prohibited when not used to conceal inferiority. Eggs, gelatin or vegetable gums are permitted where not used in excessive amounts.

This act also carries a penalty of a minimum fine of \$25.

The fruit-syrup act is one which is frequently violated because of ignorance of its existence. The non-alcoholic drinks act already referred to, was passed in 1909. The only other act even indirectly concerned with this subject, was the previous act of 1905, called the fruit syrup act. This act, which is short and specific, prohibits the same preservatives as were later prohibited in the non-alcoholic drinks act and in addition to this, prohibits the use of any coal-tar colors whatever. The use of coal-tar colors in the drinks themselves, was not prohibited by the later act, which, however, did not include the repeal of the former; so there now exists the anomalous condition that if a fruit syrup containing coal-tar color is sold as such it is a violation of the law, whether the presence of coal-tar color is declared or not, while if the same syrup be made up into a beverage and dispensed, it is perfectly legal if the presence of the artificial coloration is declared.

The anti-cigarette law of the legislative session of 1912-13 is of such recent origin and has been so prominently brought before the trade that it is not necessary to do more than refer to it.

The foregoing are the laws other than pharmacy laws which affect the retail pharmacist, and from the examples cited it will be evident to those who are familiar with trade conditions, that the reason why pharmacists have largely escaped punishment for violation of these laws, is because the activities of the food inspectors are kept so busy in other directions that they rarely take samples from drug stores, and not because violations do not exist. The best way to avoid danger of prosecution under these laws is to pay the same strict attention to their requirements that is paid to the requirements of the pharmacy laws, and then there will be no cause for fear.

PATRIOTISM.

Patriotism is a blind and an irrational impulse unless it is founded upon a knowledge of the blessings we are called to secure and the privileges we propose to defend.—*Robert Hall.*