

EDITORIAL

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WILL PHARMACY PROFIT BY THE LESSONS OF 1915?

IN the year that has passed every branch of the drug trade in this country has been subjected to unparalleled stress and strain. Never before in the history of American pharmacy has there been a more critical period, and never before has the dependency of this country upon foreign countries for drug supplies been more strikingly exhibited.

Unprecedented fluctuations in prices have occurred not only in European drugs, but also in those of every other country, including our own. Some drugs are now unobtainable and more will be, as time progresses, regardless of the existence of war or peace.

These experiences should impress us that there is a real need of extended coöperation, not only within the very complex drug trade, but reaching out practically to every allied industry. They should stimulate us as pharmacists to utilize to the uttermost the possibilities that are within our grasp. Especially is this true of the members of the American Pharmaceutical Association, who are the leaders of American pharmacy. What we should do to-day is to coördinate all the various drug activities in coöperative endeavor.

We are in a position to discover, if this has not been done, what we need to make us less dependent upon the sources of drug and chemical supply from which we are now cut off. The demand for foreign materia medica products will be materially reduced, and, if our attention is specifically directed, we may find in this country additional valuable drug plants. Certainly some of the important medicinal plants can be successfully cultivated here, as has been demonstrated by the United States Government and by private enterprise.

The manufacturers of chemicals have the opportunity of a generation; and in this connection there is an imperative need for a radical revision of our patent and trade-mark laws, with special reference to the subject of product-patents.

And with all of this, American research must be strongly encouraged; the neglect of this is, at least, one of the chief causes of the inconveniences we are now experiencing. We cannot hope, nor would it be desirable, to become entirely independent of other countries for our supplies, for we must continue to buy from them, so that we shall have the opportunity of trading with them.

But in shaping profitable trade relations with foreign countries we should have scientific tariff regulations and anti-dumping legislation not adapted for political purposes; framed for the fair, reasonable, and rational protection and development of our industries; for diversifying and accentuating the talents and genius of the whole people.

That which applies to schools where training in chemistry is the only purpose obtains to an equal degree with schools of pharmacy. Research work must be extended to render a greater and more efficient service for pharmacy. The manufacturing industries, as well as retail pharmacists, must keep in close touch with the schools, for, after all, the training and education offered in the schools are preparatory to pharmaceutical activities. The work should be done not only for the purpose of obtaining knowledge, but also for its practical applications.

Drug gardens should be developed not only for the education of the student in plant life, etc., but also to devise practical methods for the successful commercial cultivation of plants. The same thought may be applied also to the student-work of all our laboratories.

Finally, this thought—pharmacy and its related activities should work together in developing materia medica along rational lines for efficient service rather than for exploitation to derive personal profit. Let us appropriate the lessons of our recent experiences for the betterment of our business and profession. Let us take full advantage of the wonderful opportunities that are knocking at our doors. Let us encourage research work to the uttermost. And let us, as members of the American Pharmaceutical Association, do everything in our power to promote the growth and development of our own drug industries, both by organization and work on the part of our membership and by coöperation with allied interests, to the end that the constructive development of American pharmacy may be worthy of the age we live in, and the opportunities that are now before us.

E. G. E.

QUESTIONS AWAITING YOUR ANSWERS.

HAVE you given thought to the fact that *your* State Association will meet *this* year? Are you preparing to promote the work your Association was organized for? Will you help strengthen its membership, support those elected by you to guide the destinies for this year? Do you know the American Pharmaceutical Association will meet in August, in Atlantic City, and that you can, *if you will*, add others to the membership and thereby make better service possible?

The American Pharmaceutical Association will convene in August, and it is not too early to give the next annual meeting serious thought now, for the intervening months will pass by just as quickly as those that have already gone. The chairmen of the various sections should outline their programs and enlist the interest of contributors of papers. Those papers that the chairmen desire to have printed in advance should reach General Secretary William B. Day sixty days prior to the meeting. Every paper should be accompanied by a concise abstract, and no one is better qualified for such work than the author.

Every member should study the needs of the Association and its opportunities, so that our hopes may advance toward realization and enable us to move the goal of our expectations forward. While the reward of association work is accom-

plishment, its continuance is stimulated by the knowledge that there are further opportunities.

The Association has for many years been giving more to the members than the receipts have warranted; the best solution of this financial problem, and one that is easily possible, is a larger membership. If every member would recognize the persuasion of others to affiliate with the Association as one of his duties, then the financial difficulties of the Association would readily be overcome and the members will share in better service. Increased membership also provides an augmented income for the Journal whereby the running expenses of the official publication are met. The desire of the Publication Committee is to have the Journal self-supporting, and the encouragement of the members along the lines indicated, and in making the advertising patrons satisfied with their investment, will be helpful.

Every member enjoys the same rights and privileges offered by the Association; the officers are simply servants whose duty is outlined by the Association, but whose opportunities for service are more or less promoted or impeded by fervid or frigid enthusiasm of the members.

The first of the year is always a good time for retrospection, looking forward and inward. Sufficient time has elapsed for recalling unnecessary resolutions, and now is the golden opportunity for replacing some of them by determinations that will benefit not only the Association but every member of it.

Let us have just one year wherein every one will do his level best to make the American Pharmaceutical Association stronger and more efficient. If so, we will never have cause for regret, and at the same time set a good precedent for succeeding years.

E. G. E.

VACCINATION AND ANTIVACCINATION.

WE present this editorial because the average laymen may be confused by the striking discrepancies between the claims for the protective influence of vaccination against smallpox made by the proponents of this procedure and the counter-claims made by its opponents; also because the subject was discussed at a recent meeting of the Philadelphia Branch, American Pharmaceutical Association.

The advocates of vaccination are made up of laboratory scientists, sanitarians, and about 98 percent of the medical profession. The opponents of vaccination in this country consist chiefly of laymen and laywomen and a handful of physicians, few of whom, if any, occupy positions as health officers or teachers in the universities or important medical schools. If one is to be guided by the opinion of experts and those who have had an opportunity of judging of the preventive influence of vaccination against smallpox, the choice is an easy one for those persons whose minds are open.

But there are those who may say that we want the evidence and not merely

opinions from authoritative sources. The statistical evidence of the efficiency of vaccination is so overwhelming and so convincing that it is difficult to understand how any person with a mind receptive to evidential testimony can fail to be satisfied.

The history of smallpox in Germany from the time of the passage of the compulsory vaccination and revaccination law in 1874 to the present day stands as a Gibraltar of convincing evidence. Germany has stamped out smallpox as an epidemic disease—Russia still loses about 40,000 persons a year from this fell malady. One might write an entire book on the statistical side of the cases, but a careful study of the German figures suffices.

But the efficiency of vaccination is attested likewise by the almost universal testimony of physicians having experience with smallpox. It is, furthermore, indubitably proved by laboratory experiments which have the scientific weight almost of a chemical reaction. A monkey that is successfully vaccinated cannot thereafter be successfully inoculated with smallpox, although an unvaccinated ape takes the disease. Here is an experiment which can be carried out by any properly-qualified person and which yields results which prove conclusively the protective influence of vaccination. These results are completely corroborative of the work carried out by Jenner over a hundred years ago. He vaccinated a number of persons and found that such individuals could not thereafter take smallpox by inoculation. Furthermore, they remained immune against the disease contracted in the usual way throughout the period of Jenner's life. Later it was found that the protective effects of vaccination wore out in most persons after a period of years and required renewal. To minimize the importance of Jenner's discovery and charge him with a gross blunder because protection after a single vaccination did not last for life is unfair and foolish hypercriticism.

The argument that vaccination is a great evil and causes numerous deaths and innumerable diseases is a distortion and exaggeration of facts. Accidents and fatalities have occurred, but their number proportionate to the number of vaccinations carried out is infinitesimally small, and, however regrettable, they cannot weigh for a moment against the enormous number of lives saved by vaccination. Statistics show that from 1901 to 1904 inclusive 890 persons lost their lives in Philadelphia as a result of smallpox. If no one in this community had been vaccinated the deaths could readily have reached 8900 or more. The opponents of vaccination are sincere, zealous, and self-sacrificing and devote time and labor to their cause. No one can impugn their motives, but their activities tend to clog the wheels of progress, because they are false prophets.

E. G. E.