

## CAN THE RETAIL DRUGGIST CONTINUE AS A MANUFACTURER?\*

BY FRANK T. STONE.

In many ways Washington occupies the most unique position of any city in the United States. In 1878 Congress in its wisdom voted us out of a vote and we therefore have no suffrage. I will not discuss the reasons here. In a measure we are wards of the Government; Congress adopts a paternal attitude toward us, and passes all laws governing Washington and the District of Columbia. Many who live and conduct business here feel that we are the "most" governed and best regulated city in the world.

You are familiar with the great National movement culminating in the passage of the Food and Drugs Act in 1906, giving three departments of the Government supervisory power over food and drugs. The Department of Agriculture with its corps of brilliant chemists assuming the duty of inspection, testing for purity or impurity, with the power to enforce the law, reaches out with its strong and impartial arm to every nook and corner of the country.

You of the States no doubt have personally had experience with this legislation in one way or another and profited by it. We know we have in the District of Columbia, because we have been up against double-barreled inspection from 1906 to this minute. Many of the practices of the past are now the exceptions and the exercise and enforcement of this beneficent law has resulted in striking changes, advantageous to the public and the retail druggist alike. If you of the States have not been forcibly impressed with its operation you will, sooner or later, come to recognize its virtue.

Immediately accessible to the Department of Agriculture, the District of Columbia undoubtedly provided a fertile field for testing this much-needed law, with the result that changes were recommended and made with regard to the compounding of many of the so-called simple and semi-complex preparations, and their accuracy insisted upon under penalty of the law. I want to say before proceeding further, that the deductions herein presented are drawn, not only from my own personal observation, but also from the experiences of others who have had occasion to know the extent of the laws' operation under executive authority.

If the painstaking proprietor who has successfully conducted a well-regulated drug store for ten or fifteen years could give his time to making his own preparations, there is little doubt in the writer's mind that his store would not be a favorite place for Dr. Kebler's inspectors, for collecting samples prepared for human ailments. In the retail store doing a daily business of \$100.00 or over the proprietor is bound to pass on much of the detail, and usually the manufacturing of simple preparations, to clerks, in many instances irresponsible clerks—men who will always remain in that capacity because of the lack of ambition and energy to seek a higher level in the profession.

The druggist of the District of Columbia is very nearly the average druggist, or was up to 1906. Since that day, many vicissitudes have come his way. Members have received citation from the Department of Agriculture to show cause

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why their preparations differed from the formulas of the U. S. P. and N. F. For example: If in 100 different stores as many individual clerks, of varying degrees of ability, make an equal quantity of the same preparation under conditions peculiar to their locality, it is quite certain that some of the products will vary materially from the proper standard even assuming that their supplies are derived from one and the same source and are in themselves of proper quality. That this variation is likely to be in excess of 20 percent on one or the other side of the correct strength in a relatively large number of instances reference to collections and analyses of samples of simple and complex products has demonstrated over and over again, not only in the District of Columbia, but elsewhere.

It is futile to say that another clerk or the proprietor should assay or test qualitatively and quantitatively each preparation made, though obviously this could readily be economically done for the entire 100 pints or gallons if made in one operation, at one time, and by one operator. I do not mean to imply that assaying or otherwise standardizing is not advisable. On the contrary, no one is more desirous of dispensing a standardized preparation than the pharmacist, but can he do it under the conditions found in the average store and make and standardize them on the premises? Practically, he can not.

How many pharmacists have the necessary facilities and technique to standardize the assayable tinctures of the Pharmacopoeia? Even experts arrive at materially different results with many of the processes, and commercially well-known makes of many of them are physiologically as well as chemically tested before marketing—an improvement, even if super-pharmacopoeial.

Again, under stress of war conditions, the reduced amount of available competent labor in retail stores tends to eliminate any work that can be as well or better done on the large scale. Even in normal times it is easily demonstrable that the waste of time, energy and material in preparing 100 gallons of such a useless preparation as tincture of arnica by 100 different clerks in as many separate establishments makes it an economically unsound procedure when compared with making the 100 gallons at one time and at one place. At current prices for arnica flowers and alcohol, the futility of it is obvious. Who now makes his own tincture of nux vomica—even under the procedure of the two previous editions of the U. S. P.? Was not the maker of the powdered extract the real manufacturer? Can you beat a machine for making pills or seidlitz powders?

The theory of standardization is fast becoming a necessary commercial practice—necessary because it makes for economy and efficiency. Nowhere is the value of coördination more clearly shown than in the conduct of the present war. Not only has the Government standardized American products wherever possible, but in some striking instances the standardization has been extended to conform to the requirements of the Allies as well, making the use of one device and parts of devices interchangeable. By this method the highest efficiency in the conduct of the war has been obtained.

Prior to the war many large business establishments, maintaining retail stores throughout the country, had already begun standardizing their preparations with resulting economy and accuracy and shipping these preparations from one central producing plant to all their distributing points, so that the quality of a given product would be almost identical, whether purchased in New York or San Francisco, Chicago or New Orleans. Thus not only was economy effected,

but time, labor and the possibility of wide variation in the quality of preparations were avoided, with attending local, state or federal penalty.

From past experiences most of those present will doubtless recognize the desirability of encouraging the responsible manufacturers in the movement they have undertaken—a movement which relieves the individual druggist of responsibility for accuracy and at the same time assures a uniform and standard product to the public. Just how far such a movement will succeed depends largely upon the retail druggist. If his time can be more profitably devoted to the local manufacture of such preparations, undoubtedly he will continue as at present, but it is my opinion that no busy man can afford to devote his time to their manufacture or supervise and assay compounds prepared by his clerks, in order to be assured of accurately prepared products in conformity with the law. The logical alternative seems to be the encouragement of the large and responsible manufacturers who are properly equipped to produce standard and uniform preparations with infinitely less expense in comparison with the facilities of the retail druggist, the time invested and the small profit accruing from his labors in this field.

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### THE PHARMACIST'S OBJECTIVES.

BY MRS. H. R. KENASTON.

This brief outline offered upon the subject selected is designed primarily as a prelude to the discussions that may follow rather than any effort on the part of the writer to give an extended delineation of the possible results that will most assuredly be the reward of those in the profession who may elect to continuously seek progress in the profession of pharmacy.

Further, it is assumed that adequate collegiate training has preceded the legal recognition essential to the practice of pharmacy. Equipped with the legal rights and the protection conveyed with the same, it should be the aim of the pharmacist to practice the profession in its phases of adaptability of all that this right conveys and the objectives be to excel in one or more definite and clearly defined lines, selected and specialized upon, to the extent that a more or less perfected practice may be attained.

Many are the thoughts and intense are the feelings that rush to the young pharmacist's mind and grasp the soul, leading onward and ever upward in the conquest of life, but out of the wierd variety and multitude of possibilities, there are two that are preëminently important—the feeling of happiness and ambition—the joy of having attained certain professional standings, and the ambition to excel until the goal toward which the mind has directed effort has been the nearer and nearer at hand.

Every pharmacist must aspire to establish greater professional efficiency from day to day; the ardor of this aspiration should increase by added efficiency, looking toward the highest possible degree of professional service and scientific research work to the end that some new truth may be made known to the members of the profession, the benign crowning of a task strenuously followed to a successful end and that the world may have the benefit of an added truth, snatched from

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