

EDITORIAL

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HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!

HORATIO C. WOOD was a giant of soul, no less than of intellect. His great influence for good upon the development of American medicine was not confined to his epoch-making labors in the field of therapeutics, but extended into personal relations as well, and was as much owing to his nobility of character as to his preëminence in science. As author and teacher he will be missed; as a man, he will be mourned.

Inheriting the best traditions of former generations, he added whatever was good in the new things of the new day, and correlating clinical observation with laboratory study, became the Master Therapist. To his classes he was the wise, brilliant and beloved teacher; to physicians in general, the esteemed mentor, guide and friend.

This is not the place to detail his important contributions to many sciences; to biology, botany, chemistry, as well as to neurology, diagnosis, clinical medicine and pharmacology. We desire merely to record our appreciation of one of the few greatest men adorning the history of American medicine. Perhaps we are too near his time to estimate him justly; but the future historian, studying the conditions in medical theory, practice, and methods of investigation before and after the time of Horatio C. Wood, will assign him no lesser place than is here indicated, and perhaps a higher one.

Doubtless part of his success as a teacher and as a leader is to be attributed to his remarkable facility in the use of words. Had he chosen to devote his great gifts to pure literature, he would have ranked among the first in American letters. His genius for seeing into the heart of problems and expressing the pith of a matter in a few well-chosen—and sometimes tremendous—words, was rivalled only by his own power of apt and original illustration. His analogies were quaint, and sometimes startling, and thus impressed deeply the truth that he wished to convey. In a single illuminating phrase he often achieved more than others might hope to accomplish by learned and painstaking elaboration. But withal he was accurate. As sincerity was the keynote of his personality, so was truth-seeking the characteristic of his work. His books will remain a mine of information to future students, as they were the delight and wonder of his contemporaries.

The profession of pharmacy, as well as the U. S. Pharmacopoeia, is greatly indebted to him; and pharmacists may well vie with physicians in honoring and keeping green his precious memory.

S. SOLIS COHEN.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

THE publicity relative to the toxic properties of methyl alcohol saved many lives, because facts were plainly stated and the truth thereof not distorted in the daily press. The readers understood the message and recognized in it sincerity of purpose. We believe they are ready to coöperate in establishing a new trade name for "wood alcohol" that will not be indicative of an alcohol; manufacturers and dealers should, as far as commercial sales are concerned, employ only the name so selected.

We quote the *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* for February, 1920:

"To the scientist the approach of a newspaper reporter has long been a signal for withdrawal into a shell of silence. For this restraint he could not justly be blamed, for there stood before his memory the distorted condition in which an expert opinion ventured in an unguarded moment by some colleague had appeared in print.

"There are times, however, when the scientist holds the responsibility of safely guiding public opinion. He should speak, and his views should be made known through the widest medium of reaching the public, namely, the press. The difficulty in the past has been the channel through which these views reached the make-up room of the newspaper."

The information by our fellow-member, Dr. Reid Hunt, relative to methyl alcohol as a poison, was given to the public press through the News Service of the American Chemical Society; was put into newspaper style by the latter and the various news agencies gave the matter immediate distribution; the material was used in the news columns and formed the basis of much sound editorial discussion.

More publicity relative to pharmacy would benefit the public and, incidentally, pharmacists. It is important that the information be reported in readable style, and in accord with facts.

Once we were recognized as a nation governed wisely by a few laws; we are now distinguished by the multiplicity of our laws; this not only hampers their enforcement, but adds to costs, in agriculture, manufacturing, and of living. The public is not infrequently aroused to action, or consents to action, without thinking deeply or investigating carefully; legislators supply the quieting or disquieting potion, without diagnoses, by providing legislative measures for every real or imaginary public ailment whereby a few more thousand, or hundred thousand, guardians of the law are added to the rapidly increasing number of officials.

The recent fatalities from methyl alcohol provoked discussions in which, because methyl alcohol is a poison, statements were made that its sale and manufacture should be prohibited *by law*, without thought of the fact that it is one of the most widely used and valuable solvents and regarded as one of the "key chemicals," absolutely necessary for essential commodities.

More might be said of ethyl alcohol, "next to water the most valuable of all chemicals."

There will never be a time when no one will be tempted by appetite or be enticed into excesses by imagination or alluring realities, but the public can be educated relative to facts and make use of them with reason and justice. This question—"What are the Facts?"—meets the eyes of everyone entering the manager's office of a large drug manufacturing plant. Prompted by honest motives and based on a like interrogatory, rational investigation should be made of proposed legislation. The same applies to publicity. The printed card referred to checks unprepared reporters; answers to the question will suppress much needless legislation and make publicity of greater value.

Ida M. Tarbell has said, "It used to be that we thought before we spoke, but in later days it has seemed somewhat as if we spoke and never thought at all."

What are the facts?

E. G. E.

NATIONAL FORMULARY COMMITTEE, AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION, DESIRES ASSISTANCE OF PHARMACISTS.

To all users of the National Formulary.

Greeting:

The Revision Committee for the fourth revision of the National Formulary has been appointed and desires to obtain your assistance in the revision.

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We want your criticisms and suggestions.

What formulas or preparations in the present N. F. have you found unsatisfactory? In what respects are they unsatisfactory? Have you any improvements to suggest for them?

What preparations do you think should be discontinued, and why? What should be added?

In what respects do you find the N. F. faulty or deficient? Have you any suggestions to make for improvements?

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Please send criticisms or comments to the chairman,

WILBUR L. SCOVILLE, P. O. Box 488, Detroit, Michigan.
