

the materials which he dispensed, and with which he worked, should to so large a degree have continued in use, uninterruptedly to the present day! How many drugs in the old inventories of ship cargoes are now obsolete? Very few. And as to preparations, note how many have passed through nine pharmacopoeial revisions, experiencing radical alterations, but not deletions.

It is a common error to picture the apothecary himself as an aged recluse, sitting at his desk, dressed in medieval garb, with steel-rimmed spectacles on his nose, "dandruff on his coat collar and a far-away look in his eye"—sitting there inactive, surrounded by alembics and other gimcracks of the alchemists' stage properties—a man with whom we have nothing in common. For then, as at present, men were old, or young, or middle-aged; and they exhibited many variations in personality. But we may be quite sure that the apothecaries of 1820, living at a period of great activity, when stirring events were transpiring, when political interest was keen, when Philadelphia was conspicuously progressive, when the men of the hour were men of action—that these old-time pill rollers lived an active and full life, with varied interests and that they were factors in this community.

But they indited no books. They published but little. The histories of Old Philadelphia fail to chronicle their doings. Their shops and stocks have disappeared. The very buildings in which they lived and worked have, in many cases, made room for larger structures of modern architecture. Yes, the old apothecaries of Philadelphia have vanished. "Like streaks of morning clouds they have melted into the infinite azure of the past."

The beginning of a new year always induces a retrospective mood, and it may even lead us to read history. But why should we have a particular interest in 1820, aside from the interest which attaches to a time an even hundred years ago? The fact is, 1820 marks the close of an epoch. It marks the time when pharmacy, until then wholly dominated by European thought and precedent, awakened to its opportunity and struck for a certain independence. That very year the first national pharmacopoeia was issued. A few months later, in Carpenter's Hall, the first organization of apothecaries was formed. And a few months after that, this organization—The Philadelphia College of Apothecaries—opened its doors to the first class of American students in pharmacy.

Hence, 1820 has a special significance for pharmacy. What 1776 is to us as Americans, 1820 is to us as American pharmacists.

SYMPOSIUM ON SCIENTIFIC PHASES OF U. S. P. REVISION.*

CHARLES H. LAWALL: As Chairman of the Revision Committee and one who has been associated with the work during the past ten years, I have been asked to express to you some of the features, some of the developments, some of the possibilities in connection with the handling of the scientific phases of U. S. P. revision work. It must be clearly apparent to any one who has studied the method of Pharmacopoeia revision that we have arrived at a time when some marked, radical changes will have to be made in the interest of speed and in the interest of the completeness of the work. The method which has been pursued for the past two decades has been largely based upon correspondence, mimeographing—tremendously voluminous, with

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all its effect of retardation. It was brought out in the symposium before the Section on Education and Legislation yesterday (August 28, 1919) that the shortest possible time for getting a vote upon a subject was in the neighborhood of six weeks, and that is entirely too long for work of such importance.

Of course, I cannot say what the next Convention will decide to do, but I feel we should formulate some plan through our Committee on Pharmacopoeial Revision, based upon the consensus of opinion, after a free and full discussion of these important topics. In the first place, I believe that the next revision should be largely handled through personal conferences. I believe that is the greatest step forward that can possibly be made. We had personal conferences of some of the sub-committees during the last revision as emergency measures and, in every instance, work was accomplished in one or two days which would have required months, had the conferences not been held. So I believe that one of the most important things that we can recommend to the Convention is the establishment of a system, whereby a group of selected men, at least, can be empowered to meet and personally thrash out and settle questions which can be handled in that way.

I have always felt that while our Committee was representative and, as was stated in the discussion yestersay, "democratic," in that it embraced examples of every phase of the body pharmaceutical, it was a pity not to be able to call for the services of men outside and give them more credit than is possible under the present method. I would favor the authorization by the Board of Trustees of the calling in of experts in different lines of scientific activity and these experts should be given the same standing in connection with the revision work as is possessed by the members of the Committee. In this way we would be able to obtain the services of men who, we know, would add luster and value to the work but who, for one reason or another, are not members of the Revision Committee. Perhaps all of the members here present do not realize that to become eligible to membership on the Revision Committee an individual must first be an accredited delegate of some one of the recognized organizations and then must be present in person at the Convention. Very good workers were debarred last time; some were not accredited as delegates and were ineligible on that account; others were accredited as delegates but were prevented by circumstances beyond their control from attending and, therefore were debarred from selection on the Revision Committee, irrespective of their qualifications. I feel that this is a defect which needs correction so that technicalities will not prevent the selection of the best possible men for carrying on the work of revision.

Those, I think, are the most important radical changes in procedure that are necessary.

So far as the scientific work of revision is concerned, I believe as in times past we are going to get the full, wholehearted cooperation of all the manufacturing and scientific interests of pharmacy. That has been very evident during the past revision; it is even more marked at the present time. Within the past six months we have sent out a notice in which we have asked for criticisms, suggestions, corrections, etc., and we have had a very gratifying response in that connection. Suggestions have been sent in by individuals from every part of the United States. During this week's meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association the members of the Revision Committee who are present—by the way nearly half of the members of the Revision Committee have been in attendance at this week's meeting—have held a short meeting at which certain principles were decided upon in connection with drafting of general principles for recommendation to the next Convention. It was also decided that all these suggestions, which have been and will be received, are to be circularized to the entire Revision Committee, and are then to be classified and assigned to the various sub-committees. On the basis of this wealth of material reports can be drafted by the various sub-committees which will be recommendatory and which will largely prepare the way for prompt action on the part of the incoming Revision Committee.

Now it remains, of course, for this Section to express itself upon the matters, which are within its province, as to general principles and also as to specific methods of handling the work. I believe the most necessary changes, which should be made in connection with the handling of the Scientific work of the Pharmacopoeial revision, have been called to your attention.

A paper by Henry Kraemer on "Alcohol in the Pharmacopoeia," was then read. (See January JOURNAL A. PH. A., 1920, p. 55.)