

and your penmanship by it; each ingredient on a separate line, the principal article, or the strongest drug on the first, adjunct on the next, and vehicle on the last, unless you have some special reason for inverting them. Such methodical system insures well-balanced prescriptions, and engenders the respect and favorable criticism of those into whose hands they chance to fall. Also, take care to conform your prescriptions to the changes that are from time to time made in the names of the officinal articles of the pharmacopœia by authorized bodies and nomenclators.

Strictly avoid prescribing incompatibles, both chemical and physiological, such as the combination of chlorate of potassium with tannic acid or with sulphur, nitrate of silver with creasote, etc., which are explosives, and may blow up either the dispenser or the patient. Charcoal is a simple thing, sulphur is another, and saltpetre is still another, but put them together and you have gunpowder, which is not simple, and, unless that potent agent is intended, look out. Although the list of incompatibles is a long one, you will do well to learn it thoroughly, otherwise you will subject yourself to the sarcastic remarks of the pharmacist, and possibly to whispering doubts and disparaging innuendoes. Remember, however, that some medicines, though physiologically incompatible, are not therapeutically so, as under certain circumstances you may combine them so that they may favorably modify each other, as morphia and belladonna, acetate of lead and sulphate of zinc, etc.

Instead of writing prescriptions three inches in length, it is better to use a single remedy, or, if two are indicated, to alternate them, unless you know they are compatible and will not make an unsightly mixture.

Again, your prescription is always the expression of your opinion and of your skill in a case:—

“The mind is the man.”

Therefore, try to make every one you write show on its face that you have prescribed with a definite purpose, to meet some clear indication.

Be careful that abbreviations of names, manner of writing quantities, etc., leave no room for mistake or inexactness in dispensing, and make it a rule to read carefully every prescription after you finish writing it.

It is scarcely necessary to add that, while the distinctive names of the several ingredients in a prescription should be written in Latin, the directions for use, *i.e.*, all that follows the S. (signa), should be in English, as they are intended for the guidance of the patient.

Remember that the cloven-foot R, that is placed at the head of every prescription (*præ*, beforehand; *scriba*, to write), although originally the astrological sign for Jupiter (♃), and for ages placed by the ancients at the head of prescriptions, to invoke the aid of the God of Thunder, is now used merely as a symbol to represent the Latin word *Recipe* (take thou).

While it is proper, strictly speaking, to commence every word, after the first, in the names of the articles in your prescription with a small letter, *i.e.*, *Liquor potassii arsenitis*, yet many physicians purposely begin each with a capital, chiefly because it looks well, and also renders the word less mistakable.

Sign either your name or initials to every prescription you write, that the pharmacist may recognize its writer; to such as are likely to be compounded by pharmacists who know you well the initials will be sufficient, but, to all that are likely to be put up by those who know you not, put your full name.

In prescribing, it is a bad and injudicious habit to adopt a routine practice, or slavishly to follow your own, or anybody else's, stereotyped formulæ for certain diseases. You should invariably adapt your remedies to the case, instead of heedlessly picking out a ready-made formula from your collection as you would a hat in a hat-store. One formula, for instance, for the several forms of diarrhœa, is about as apt to suit every case of relaxed bowels as one coat is to fit every man in a regiment.

Remember that medicine is a mass of facts, and that he who best interprets these facts is the best physician, and that

skill in practice consists not only in diagnosis, prognosis, and prescribing medicine, and in knowing what one can and what one cannot do, but is the combined result of all the powers that the physician legitimately brings into the management of cases. In other words, the skillful use of drugs is but *one* of many elements that make the unit of medical skill. You must also study mankind as well as medicine, and remember, when working on diseased bodies, that they are inhabited by minds that have variable emotions, strong passions, and vivid imaginations, which sway them powerfully, both in health and in disease. To be successful you should fathom each patient's mind, discover its peculiarities, and conduct your efforts in harmony with its conditions. Let hope, expectation, faith, contentment, fear, resolution, will, and other psychological states be your constant aids, for they may each at times exercise legitimate power, and impart the greatest amount of good to the sick. It is not length of time in practice, but observation and reflection, that teach one to measure human passions and emotions; and if you are not a keen observer of men and things, if you cannot read the book of human nature correctly, and unite knowledge of physic with an understanding of the effects of love, fear, grief, anger, malice, envy, lust, and other hidden but strong passions that govern our race, you will be sadly deficient even after twenty years' experience :—

“Hair gray, and no brains yet.”

Professional fame is a physician's chief capital; ambition to increase it by all legitimate means is not only fair, but commendable. After you attain this, you will not be apt to lose either it or the practice it insures, so long as you are sober, decent, and discreet in conduct, and have the physical health to endure the watching, fatigue, and exposure incident to our business.

There are two kinds of legitimate reputation a physician may acquire,—a popular or common one with the people, and a higher professional one with his brethren. These are often

based on entirely different grounds, and are usually no measure of each other; a few of the most excellent, with loftier ambition, struggle earnestly for the latter, while the mass are striving for the former, chiefly because, being altogether practical, it requires less skill, talent, and study to acquire, and, also, because it is more profitable. Many such avoid all great scientific labors and controversies, and, having little or no public life, remain shut up within themselves, moving about quietly and almost unobserved except by those whom they attend; consequently, a knowledge of their habits and doings is confined to the domestic bedside and the narrow circle of their private practice, and the degree of their skill and experience always remains somewhat unknown and mysterious.

Without one or the other variety of reputation no physician can reap the honors or rewards which are the objects of his ambition, whether that be the acquisition of money, the desire of usefulness, or the love of fame. You should strive to acquire both varieties.

One fact that you will notice is, that the public naturally prefer a full-of-health, ever-ready physician to a delicate or sickly one, and ailing physicians often conceal the fact that they are sickly or that their health is failing as much and as long as possible, well knowing that the competition in our profession is now so great that for every person whose powers fail ten are ready, with fresh strength, to take his place, and that, if reports of their ailments become current talk, the public will believe that solicitude for their own condition will absorb it from their patients, and they will be abandoned as unreliable and unfit to practice, and their business will be thereby injured or ruined.

After you have practiced awhile and discovered what your chief deficiencies are, and determine exactly what course you ought to pursue, if you will spend a few months in additional study of the great principles of our science in some of the great American or European hospitals, and then return and

settle down, it will be of tenfold benefit to you in more ways than one.

A discreet tongue is a great gift and a great aid to success. When elopements, seductions, rapes, confinements, or abortions; or the scandal about Dr. Bigscamp, or Rev. Mr. Blacksheep, or Miss Oilyeve, or the ignobleness of the pedigree of Mrs. Butterfly, or the secret history of Miss Pride, or the wrecked and wretched greatness of Mr. Pomp, or the adulteries or intrigues of Mrs. Freelove, or the evil reports about this virgin, that wife, or the other widow, are being talked of, perhaps in terms that decency would require to be printed only with initial and terminal letters, with a dash between, you should have a silent, or at least a prudent, tongue; all you say on such subjects will surely be magnified and repeated from mouth to mouth, and its results will be a permanent injury to you. The position of the gossiping physician has ever been a very bad one, and he is sometimes called to unpleasant account.

Take especial care, while in contact with tale-bearers and scandal-mongers, or scandal-loving crowds, to keep the conversation on general or abstract and legitimate subjects, and determinedly avoid descanting upon individuals and private affairs, or what somebody, or a coterie or clique of somebodies, has said.

Be careful, also, to note the great and never-failing advantage that refined people, with virtuous minds, pure thoughts, and courteous language, have, in every station of life, over the coarse and the vulgar; and in view thereof let your manner, conversation, jokes, etc., be always chaste and pure. Never forget yourself in this particular, for nothing is more hurtful to a physician than the exhibition of an impure mind. School yourself to avoid all and every impropriety of language and manner, and never allow yourself to become insensible to the demands of modesty and virtue. Chasten every thought, weigh well every word, and measure every phase of your deportment,—especially that which concerns the fair fame of

woman,—and let your treatment of all females be refined and delicate, if you would succeed fully, especially if gynæcology and obstetrics be the one great aim of your ambition. A lewd-minded physician who indulges in double *entendres*, coarse ambiguities, vulgar jokes, jocular innuendoes, and indelicate anecdotes about the sexes—

“To reflect on women ever ready”—

with other men or with coarse women, even though he poses as a gentleman, is sure to be shunned, and the reason therefor made the subject of gossip and passed from one to another in social whispers, till it reaches the purest and best of the community. Thoughtful people of both sexes everywhere rightfully regard such libertines as being far more amenable to criticism, and far more dangerous to admit into the bosoms of their families, than rough-mannered believers in social purity who gamble, drink, or swear.

“Immodest words admit of no defense,
For want of decency is want of sense.”

Study the art of questioning, and when it devolves on you, in the course of professional duty, to ask questions on delicate topics, or to broach very private subjects, do so with a chaste, grave simplicity,—neither too direct on the one hand, nor with too much circumlocution on the other.

Physicians are made in the colleges, but tried in the world. Your personality and deportment in the presence of patients will have much to do with your success. Blessed is the physician who has the gift of making friends. A pompous, or cold, or cheerless, heartless or indifferent manner toward people; or a studied or sanctimonious isolation of one's self from them socially; or failure to recognize would-be friends on the streets and elsewhere, as if from a lofty independence, or as if they were inferior mortals and beneath you,—

“I am resolved on death or dignity,”—

often gives unmeant offense, and tends to destroy all warmth toward a physician, and usually causes their hapless possessor

to fail to inspire either friendly partiality or faith; and a physician who cannot in some way make friends or awaken faith in himself cannot fail to fail. The reputation of being a "very nice man" makes friends of everybody, and is, with many, even more potent than skill. To be both affable in manner and skillful in action makes a very strong combination,—one that is apt to waft its possessor up to the top wave of professional success and repute. If, moreover, he be especially refined in manner and moderately well versed in medicine, his politeness will make him a troop of friends, and will be professionally more effective with them than the most profound acquaintance with histology, microscopic pathology, and other scientific acquirements.

If your manners and conversation are of the gentle, soft, and tender kind, that win and conciliate rather than repel children, it will be fortunate, and probably will put many a dollar into your pocket that might have gone to some irregular. Such habits as fondling and kissing people's teetsy-weetsy children, or carrying them pockets of candy, however, are liable to be misconstrued into an effort to secure the good will of the parents for selfish motives, and should therefore be avoided.

Cultivate a cheerful mental temperament; gentle cheerfulness is a never-failing source of influence. It is a magnetic nerve tonic and stimulant; it diffuses sunshine, cheers the timorous, dispels the deadening fogs of hopelessness, encourages the despondent to look on the bright side, and comforts the despairing. The science of medicine, contrary to the general belief, is not a melancholy, sombre, mournful profession, but a bright, cheerful one. The sincerely grateful faces you will see and the "Thanks to God!" you will hear while completely curing some poor fellow-creatures and relieving others of pain and ailments, and allaying fear and administering comfort to the minds of multitudes of others, will make you realize your usefulness and the great good your noble, humane, and beneficent profession enables you to confer on suffering humanity,—the contemplation of which should make you cheerful and happy, and satisfied

with yourself and your elected life-work, in spite of the many contradictions and disappointments you are subject to in practice.

Bear in mind that the physician's visit, being the chief event of a sick person's day, is eagerly watched for, and let no ordinary engagements interfere with your punctuality in making it; also study to acquire an agreeable, courteous, gentlemanly, and professional manner of approaching the sick and taking leave of them. There is an art, a perfection, in entering the chamber of sickness with a dignified yet gentle manner, that clearly evinces interest and a determination to master the case,—in asking the necessary questions, in making the requisite examination, then carefully and wisely ordering the proper remedies, and departing with a cheerful, self-satisfied demeanor that puts the patient at his ease, and inspires confidence on the part of himself and his friends, and a belief that you can and will do for him all that the science of medicine enables you to do. The personal appearance, the walk, the movements, the gestures, the polite bow, the well-modulated voice, the language, the natural mode of intercourse, and the elegant and instructive conversation of some physicians are as cheering and confidence-inspiring, to the sensitive nerves of the sick, as a sunbeam on a May day; the manners of others, as rude, coarse, cold, heartless, indifferent, and repulsive as a March wind.

Familiarity with the many little details of the sick-room—including the necessary art of applying bandages, making beef-teas, gruels, mustard plasters, poultices, etc., and with dressing wounds, passing catheters, reducing herniæ; getting a fish-bone from the throat, a splinter or a needle from the hand, or a mote from the eye, or teaching the nurse how to prepare the obstetric bed; seeing that those working subordinate to you do their duty, and various other minor duties that you may be there incidentally called on to perform or direct—often do more to create a favorable impression than your pills and powders. Indeed, it is to a very great extent by minor matters that watchful nurses and other habitues of the sick-room will judge you.