

imperfections, or in nick-naming different physicians in derision; or to keep his prescription-file open to miscellaneous inspection, or to have a medical *protégé* under his wing, into whose hands he endeavors to direct customers for selfish purposes, or to be guilty of any other grossly unprofessional conduct, you will be fully justified in directing your patients to go elsewhere for medicines.

In ordering syringes, brushes, atomizers, breast-pumps, probangs, etc., with your prescriptions, be careful to specify the kind or size you wish. To write a prescription for a solution, and add, "also a syringe for using," is often as perplexing to the pharmacist as if you were to send for a slip of adhesive plaster as long as a string or for a lump of rhubarb the size of a piece of chalk.

When any one is unable to pay the full price for what you prescribe, the words "Poor patient" in your handwriting, at the top of the prescription, will secure from any pharmacist the greatest reduction in price that he can afford to make.

You may take the following as somewhat of a guide in determining whether this or that pharmacy is conducted on a proper plane and worthy of confidence. Among the distinguishing features of a legitimate and properly conducted pharmacy are:—

1. Proprietor an experienced practical pharmacist, of intelligence, capacity, and integrity.
2. Competent and courteous assistants.
3. Pride and skill shown in selecting and preparing pure medicines.
4. Prescriptions compounded only by graduates in pharmacy.
5. A full and comprehensive line of pure drugs, apparatus and appliances for use in the care of the sick, also dietetics and sick-room conveniences kept.
6. An orderly and perfectly equipped prescription department. Store neat and attractive.

7. Quiet and discipline maintained. No loungers or smokers.
8. No liquors sold as beverages.
9. Not a bazaar of general merchandise.
10. Patent medicines and other nostrums shown and sold only when called for.
11. No habitual prescribing or giving medical advice.
12. Prices neither cheap nor exorbitant, but reasonable.
13. Prompt attention and accuracy characteristic.

Among the features that mark improperly conducted ones are:—

1. Habitual prescribing over the counter.
2. Indiscriminate refilling of prescriptions.
3. Unnecessary delay and detention of customers.
4. Careless handling of medicines and loose management of store.
5. Patent and proprietary remedies paraded and pushed.
6. Disparagement of physicians to the laity.
7. Store a resort for political or other crowds or cliques.
8. Unchaste conversations and disreputable conduct.
9. Wines and liquors sold as beverages.
10. Dealing in articles used for criminal or immoral purposes.
11. Engrossing attention to sale of soda-water, cigars, tobacco, fancy goods, etc.
12. Store kept merely as an adjunct to some other project.
13. Lack of sobriety in proprietor or clerks.

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Be prompt and decided in refusing to give laudatory professional certificates to any secret article; do not be too liberal even in giving them to legitimate pharmaceuticals, and never issue one founded on any other basis than purity of ingredients, or special skill or experience in compounding them.

Willingness to give medical certificates is an almost universal weakness of mankind. The idea of being paraded in

print as "an authority" in connection with some wonderful cure is pleasing to thousands of people in every station of life, and makes them willing to have their names and even their pictures paraded in almanacs, hand-bills, and newspapers. Indeed, many impressible people, whose bump of wonder is easily touched, could almost be inveigled into certifying in medical matters that two and two make five by any sharper who understands how to tickle their self-conceit and love of notoriety.

Be alike determined in declining to give (un)professional certificates to any one on disputed or partisan questions, or in regard to surgical appliances, copyrighted medicines, rival wines, competing mineral waters, beef-extracts, baking powders, articles of commerce, patent contrivances, health resorts, etc., for they are often improperly used and made subservient to purposes not anticipated, and will affect the interests of the profession at large, as well as your own. If you ever give one, people who happen to know you may regard its personal and not its professional significance, but every one else throughout the land will know your title only. When amiable John Doe gives his certified opinion that ice is *hot* and fire is *cold*, it remains simply John Doe's opinion; but when John suffixes his title of M.D., he undoubtedly gives that certificate a professional significance, and, to some extent, involves the entire profession therein.

You may judge certificate-giving by its prejudicial effects on our own profession. One of the worst inflictions we endure to-day is the endless parade of misleading certificates from wide-mouthed clergymen, politicians, merchants, lawyers, D.D.s, LL.D.s (A.S.S.s, N.G.s), and other "distinguished citizens," known and unknown, recommending all kinds of medical nostrums.

"Heigh ho, the devil must be dead."

You know, and every sensible person knows, that such Peck-sniffian certificates are not worthy of credence, and that the

preacher of Gospel truth who (instead of confining himself to preaching the Glorious undefiled Gospel of the blessed God, the God of the Bible), bribed by a box of pills, or a bottle of biters (that make drunkards and kill forty times as quick as whisky does), forgets his high mission, the cure of dying and perishing souls, and with reverential sanctimonious solemnity (ahem!) turns up the whites of his eyes,—

"O hollow, hollow, hollow!"—

and lends his name and the cloak of theology to assist the Diabology of charlatans and sharpeners who deceive the afflicted with quack nostrums that are not worth the cost of the bottle they are in, must be either a silly dupe or a cruel knave.

"Knaves and fools divide the world."

Prof. Brass, Dr. Skinem, and every other sharp quack knows the influence of a clergyman's religio-medical indorsement published in a Sunday paper, and hence makes special and too often successful efforts to obtain it, feeling certain that they can easily entrap the dupable portion of the flock after the Shepherd (?) is secured,—

"He steers his boat well,"—

and it is a singular fact that, though few men get more gratuitous advice out of physicians than ministers of the Gospel, yet no class do more to injure the profession, by the ridiculous countenance they give to various kinds of quackery and pathies and isms. Truth should teach teachers to teach truth.

Suppose it suited the pride and the principles of our profession to enter the self-advertising arena, with quacks and patent-medicine men, and to scatter reports of all our daily cures and successes all over the land! Where would the petty triumphs of quackery, and patent pills, and bottled nostrums stand in the contest? Austin Flint *vs.* Hostetter; Samuel D. Gross *vs.* Brandeth, Johns Hopkins Hospital *vs.* Keeley's.

Whenever you are asked by traders in medicine, or their plausible drummers, who have no further interest in sickness

than as it advances the sale of their nostrums; and when tempted by glowing advertisements, highly-colored certificates, epitomized treatises on therapeutics and practice, etc., to prescribe and make a market for their semi-secret trade-mark pharmaceuticals, copyrighted medicines, and the nine hundred and ninety-nine elixirs, restoratives, tonics, panaceas, and other specialties with attractive empirical names, gotten up by middlemen, crusading druggists, manufacturing pharmacists, and pharmaceutical associations, with labels that give suggestions for their use, to catch the popular eye and the popular dollar—think of the cunning cuckoo (see p. 32), and how its one egg hatches evil to the whole nest, and do not use them. Patent medicines are wolves in wolves' clothing; proprietary medicines are wolves in sheep's clothing, whose owners are begging favors from you with one hand and intercepting your patients with the other.

To fully realize the colossal proportions of the lucrative proprietary remedy method of superseding physicians, and of the mercenary motives and humbuggery that lie at the bottom of it, and the injury it inflicts on health, credit, and business, go and take a bird's-eye view of the vast and bewildering array of empirical and proprietary compounds: syrups, balsams, expectorants, and panaceas, each good for everything,—asthma and sore eyes, the itch and worms; and at the bushels of recommendations under which the shelves in the quack and proprietary departments of every wholesale drug-store groan, and then reflect on the enormous sums of money spent in telling—

Quack! Quack!! Quack!!!—

of their virtues in the newspapers, and on rocks, fences, and dead walls. Thus enlightened, you can hardly fail firmly to resolve henceforth to abjure them.

“The path of duty is the path of safety.”

Unless you have mistaken your profession, are incapable of thinking and lack ingenuity, our standard and accepted agents, the United States Pharmacopœia and the dispensaries,

should certainly be large enough and reliable enough to allow you to exercise yourself freely in the art of prescribing, and to make *any* required combination, and to accurately adjust the relative proportion of every ingredient to the condition of your patient; and you should, therefore, assert your intelligence and follow this, the legitimate mode of prescribing, and let our commercial rival's ready-made novelties, patented articles, and dish-water substitutes for medical attendance alone.

Of course, if anything truly useful or unmistakably better than the old is discovered, but not yet in the pharmacopœia, you would not, you should not fail at once to give your patient the benefit of it; but beware of all articles that are being advertised and pushed on catchpenny principles.

The principle which governs our condemnation of secret nostrums is this: They not only do more harm than good, but, if puffing and advertising alone enable the proprietor of a quack remedy to fleece the sick, its unprincipled owner deserves exposure and contempt. If the nostrum is really valuable, *which is very rarely the case*, its composition should be freely and fully disclosed for the benefit of suffering humanity.

You should also maintain your independence and never order A.'s, B.'s, or C.'s make of anything *unless* you have some specific therapeutical reason for so doing. To thus particularize would not only reflect injuriously on every other manufacturer and cause a still greater popular distrust of our materia medica and pharmacopœia, but also put the compounder to additional trouble and expense; for he might have several other varieties of the same article in his stock, and yet be compelled by your specification to get another. It almost invites substitution. I knew one case in which the pharmacist, though he had twenty-one different preparations of codliver-oil emulsions, resembling each other so closely in all important respects that but a hair divided them, standing spoiling on his shelves, had to get the twenty-second to fill such a prescription.

Do not, however, oppose any remedial agent that is a

distinct improvement in pharmacy, or any particular brand of anything on account of its being a monopoly, if that monopoly is owing to unusual skill, superior quality of materials used, or great perfection in its manufacture.

Patients are under the impression that pharmacists have about ninety cents profit in every dollar, and also think physicians know precisely what a medicine ought to cost, and will often ask you *how much* the druggist will charge for the remedies you have prescribed. Reply promptly that you do not know, that some medicines cost the pharmacist twenty times as much as others, and avoid mentioning any specific sum; because, were you to guess too high, they might infer that he had either made a mistake or used inferior drugs; and were you to guess too low, they would probably accuse the pharmacist of overcharging, and perhaps drag your name into their squabbles. Further, the people naturally overlook one all-important, priceless ingredient that every good pharmacist employs in compounding prescriptions, the worth of which he justly adds: I mean, the concentrated extract of brains.

Whenever you prescribe a remedy that is unusually expensive, such as musk, salicin, resorcin, salol, oil of erigeron, etc., take care to inform the patient of the fact, and that expensive drugs are no more profitable to the pharmacist than cheaper ones, so that he will not be surprised and cavil when the pharmacist tells him how much he charges for it.

Notice particularly whether a pharmacist gives unusual prominence to nostrums, quack almanacs and placards, or has quack advertising signs painted on his doors or outside walls, and it will give you a true insight into his aims and attitude toward our profession. If you see that he is pushing his *quack* department in a hurrah way, with quack proprietors' portraits in his windows and hanging around his store,—

“Roaring, roaring, roaring, nothing but roaring,”—

and his own name and influence used in handbills and almanacs as a vendor of nostrums, bitters, plasters, pads, etc., or selling

liquor as a beverage, or selling medicines at retail or less than his pharmaceutical neighbors pay for them at wholesale, you may be sure that he is conducting his establishment simply as a tradesman, on a *trade basis* rather than on a professional one, which latter presumes him to love pharmacy and to devote his chief attention to the inspection and preparation of pure and reliable drugs, and compounding prescriptions with scrupulous exactness; and by shunning him you will fulfill a moral obligation.

To sell abortifacients, or vile nostrums intended to produce abortion, with the pretended caution, “Perfectly harmless, but not to be taken by women in a certain condition,” is criminal.

“Cunning has but little honor.”

Probably you have no right to ask or expect that the pharmacist should not deal in quack or proprietary medicines, or anything else for which there is a demand, as he keeps his store to make a living; you have, however, an undoubted right to expect him to show the equity of his position between their owners and us by keeping them out of sight, to be shown only when called for, just as he does sweet spirits of nitre, syrup of the iodide of iron, aromatic spirits of ammonia, and other fruits of pharmaceutical chemistry, instead of pushing their sale by displaying their announcements far more prominently than legitimate pharmaceuticals.

In drugs and medicines purity and accuracy are of the first importance, because the uniformity in action of every medicine is in proportion to its purity and goodness; some of our important remedies vary greatly in quality and in strength, and this is one of the occasional causes of uncertainty in the practice of medicine, and such variability would modify your efforts too much to be risked in any important case. A badly compounded prescription may rob you of your reputation and deprive the patient of his chances of recovery. If you think, therefore, that an important prescription is likely to be sent to a pharmacist whom you conscientiously believe to use inferior, stale, or impure articles, it is your duty to take care that it be sent elsewhere;

for, being responsible for the patient's welfare, and having your own reputation to care for, you have a perfect right, and indeed it is your duty under such circumstances, to have your remedies procured where you believe your prescriptions will be properly made up.

Pharmacy requires nice and delicate skill and imposes great responsibility, and the art of medicine is imperfect enough at best, and you will encounter more than enough of new and strange problems to remind you of your lack of aids and of the insufficiency of human resources, without adding the risk of being thwarted by the error, fraud, or accident of an unreliable pharmacist with deteriorated, adulterated, or inert drugs; but when you find it necessary to *ignore* any one for this reason, take care to do so in a discreet, ethical manner, with as little personality as possible.

Whether to allow a patient to know the name and nature and action of the remedies you prescribe, or not, requires great discretion, and good judgment is required to distinguish between persons who would and those who would not be benefited by an explanation of the intended remedies. There is often a temptation to endeavor to enlist the patient's confidence by furnishing him an insight into the nature and object of the agents employed; but the majority of experienced physicians seldom commit themselves, or if, in certain cases, to gratify the patient's whims, they appear to yield to the temptation, their explanations are advisedly ambiguous, and you, while judiciously seeking to inspire confidence in your patients, had better keep them, as far as may be, in ignorance of the remedies employed. But few physicians have escaped the chagrin of seeing their reasons and their remedies made use of to blame them and to cast discredit on their skill. You will, indeed, often wish you had synonyms for the terms quinia, zinc, opium, chloral, strychnia, morphia, and probably for other articles in daily use. Whenever a synonym for any of them is supplied, it will be judicious in many cases to use it. By employing the terms *ac. phenic.*

for carbolic acid, *secale cornut.* for ergot, *kalium* for potassium, *natrum* for sodium, *chinin* for quinia, *tinctura thebaica* for *tinctura opii*, etc., you will debar many a patient from reading your prescriptions and hampering you,—a check which is often highly desirable. You can also further eclipse his wisdom by transposing the terms you use from the usual order and writing the adjective in full and abbreviating the noun,—*e.g.*, instead of writing *quinia sulph.*, write *sulphatis quin.*; compound cathartic pills, *cath. pil. comp.*, etc., etc.

The official pharmacopœia distinctly recognizes the necessity of concealing the nature of certain preparations; and opium may be ordered under several synonyms without giving the slightest suspicion of its presence. You cannot greatly err in honestly seeking to conceal from your patients the nature of the remedies prescribed for their ailments.

“The silent physician has many advantages.”

Be very careful to have all powerful remedies intended for external use labeled “For external use,” or “Not to be taken,” which will not only tend to prevent errors and misunderstandings, but in case they are swallowed by mistake it will save you from censure. For the same reasons, also be careful to order all mixtures, that may separate on standing, to be shaken before pouring out the dose, otherwise the patient may get all the active ingredients in either the first few or the last few doses.

When you prescribe a remedy of such an active character that it would poison if taken in large doses, or all at once, it is wise to make such verbal cautionary remarks about it as will fully put those who administer it on their guard. Also, when you prescribe a remedy for external use, and at the same time one that is to be taken internally, be careful to tell the patient how each will look and smell, so that he may not confound them and swallow the wrong one. Absent-minded pharmacists have more than once put liniment labels on bottles containing

remedies for internal use, and those designed for the latter upon the liniment-bottles, thereby leading to a jury of inquest, which a word of explanation from the physician to the patient might have prevented.

Pharmacists might easily avoid the possibility of thus exchanging labels by compounding one and labeling it before commencing the other. By instructing the pharmacist to put a *red* label on all the bottles for external use, security against mistakes is better insured.

If, in prescribing such agents as tincture of belladonna or tincture of iodine, for external use, you direct the pharmacist to "put brush in the cork," seeing the brush when the bottle is opened, will almost surely prevent its being taken internally.

You will notice that some pharmacists label the remedies they compound for you with their *file numbers only*, thus, 7483; while others adopt the much more satisfactory plan of adding the date on which it was compounded, thus, 7483, 19-7-93, signifying that it is numbered 7483, and that it was compounded July 19, 1893. The latter plan will enable you to distinguish between the dates at which you prescribed different bottles of medicine, and may otherwise be of service to you. I am quite sure the majority of pharmacists would cheerfully make use of this system if they were aware how often it assists the physician.

Even with the best care every one is liable to make mistakes, and even the wisest men are not always wise. One might write tablespoonful where he meant teaspoonful, or sulph. morph. instead of sulph. quin., or acid. carbolic. when he meant acid. boracic., or tinct. opii when he meant tinct. opii camph., etc.

It is well, therefore, to request neighboring pharmacists always to inform you of any ambiguity or apparent mistake in prescriptions bearing your initials before dispensing them, and, in return, when

"Some one has blundered,"

and you have reason to suspect the mistake has been in com-

pounding the prescription, be careful not to make your suspicion known either by word, look, or action, till you have conferred with the person who dispensed it. The error, if one exist, is just as apt to be yours as his.

When a prescription is for an infant, or a young child, it is a great safeguard against error in compounding to put at the head of the prescription, "For an infant," or "For a child," or "For little Willie," etc.

Bear in mind that the pharmacist, like yourself, is only human, with long hours and short pay, and that he, like other persons, requires some *rest* and relaxation from his drug-mixing and drug-selling slavery; and do not order mixtures requiring tedious manipulations, or direct filthy ointments to be made, or dirty plasters to be spread, suppositories to be molded, or other unpleasant duties to be performed on Sunday, or during sleeping-hours, unless they be urgently needed.