

CANADIAN PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT, - - - WM. ELLIOT, Esq.

The regular meetings of the Society take place on the first Wednesday evening of each month, at the Mechanics' Institute, when, after the transaction of business, there is a paper read, or discussion engaged in, upon subjects of interest and value to the members.

The Society admits as members, Chemists and Druggists of good standing, and their assistants and apprentices, if elected by a majority vote, and on payment of the following fees:

Principals \$4 00 per Annum
Assistants & Apprentices, 2 00 "

The JOURNAL is furnished FREE to all members.

Parties wishing to join the Society may send their names for proposal to any of the members of the Society. A copy of the Constitution and By-laws of the Society will be furnished on application.

HENRY J. ROSE, Secretary.

THE CANADIAN Pharmaceutical Journal.

E. B. SHUTTLEWORTH, EDITOR.

TORONTO, ONT., OCTOBER, 1869.

Correspondence and general communications of a character suited to the objects of this JOURNAL, are invited, and will always be welcome. The writer's name should accompany his communication, but not necessarily for publication.

Subscriptions will not be acknowledged by letter, as our sending the paper may be taken as sufficient evidence of the receipt of the money.

All communications connected with the paper to be addressed, post-paid,

"EDITOR CANADIAN PHARMACEUTICAL JOURNAL,
TORONTO."

PHARMACEUTICAL LEGISLATION.

We look forward to the coming session of the Ontario Legislature with an anxiety, which, we are well assured is shared not only by every member of the Pharmaceutical Society, but every right minded druggist in the province. The Pharmacy Act, which obtained a first reading at the close of last session, will, in all probability, be again brought before the House, and on the decision then rendered the most important issues depend, affecting alike the welfare of the druggist, the medical profession, and the entire community.

That the present state of things is bad, is a fact apparent to all. Although we have a law to regulate the sales of poisons, it is of little effect, and if ever so rigorously carried out would not cover the required ground. So far as it goes it is well enough, and may serve to throw impediments in the way of the suicide, or poisoner, but these restrictions are

of but minor importance when we take into consideration the vast field which is left open to the operations of unqualified and incompetent druggists, whose serious and often fatal blunders recur with an appalling frequency. The injury such persons may effect is beyond estimation, and can never be fully realized, owing to the difficulty of tracing out its source. It is only when consequences ensue, which directly and pointedly indicate the offender, that anything is revealed. These instances do not by any means comprise the majority, as the services of the dispenser are seldom required except in cases of sickness, and then any ill effects which may result from an error in medicine, are generally attributed to other causes. The physician is often puzzled by unusual and unanticipated complications of disease, which, in a great many cases could be traced out to the work of incompetent dispensers.

There is another class of errors which cannot be legally laid at the door of the druggist, but for which we hold he is morally responsible—we allude to errors arising from mistakes of the prescriber. It is not sufficient for the dispenser to be able to read a prescription correctly—though, this we must admit is often a matter of no small difficulty—he should also be able to detect anything unusual, either in the substances ordered, their combination, or doses. Many doctors are lamentably deficient in pharmaceutical knowledge; some are very careless, dashing off a prescription at the bedside of the patient—ten to one, writing with a pencil without a point, and on a crumpled scrap of paper—and with the most utter disregard of laws, chemical or posological. We venture to say that there is not a druggist, or druggist's assistant, in Canada, who cannot record many instances of this,—of mixtures which obstinately resisted all tendency to mix; of pills which could never be rendered pilular; of powders which exploded at the first touch of the pestle. Very perplexing, to say the least of it; but, not so bad as a solution of sulphate of morphia, with the addition of aromatic spirit of ammonia, to correct, as the physician explained, "the druggy effects of the opium," or of the dubious mixture of iodide of potassium and bichloride of mercury, the last dose of which would certainly do the business for syphilis, most effectually; or the delightful tonic of tincture of gentian and chloride of iron, so frequently ordered. We will barely mention "Tinct. Lyttæ; a tablespoonful three times a day," though we can vouch for it; nor shall we refer to the hundreds of instances, of less palpable, though not less dangerous mistakes made by physicians in calculating doses, which the prescription file reveals to us. A druggist should then be able to detect these errors and

have them corrected; and if, by reason of ignorance, he suffers them to pass through his hands, and death results; if not amenable to the courts of earth, he will certainly have to answer the charge of his brother's blood at a higher tribunal.

The indiscriminate sale of dangerous medicinal substances by some classes of tradesmen is a practice which cannot be too strongly condemned; nor is the unrestricted sale of poisons by druggists of much less importance. We need not enlarge on this point, as the evil is so flagrant, and its bad effects so often realized, as to render comment unnecessary.

All these things point to adequate qualification on the part of the druggist; but in this country, as well as in others, it has been found that this condition cannot be secured without having resort to legislation. As long as laxity of law permits, there will always be found men ready to turn a dollar, even at the expense of the lives of their fellow-creatures. A desire to rid the profession of these impostors, and thereby to encourage those who really possessed the requisite knowledge, spurred on the druggists of Great Britain, through the continued struggles of many years, which so successfully terminated in the passage of the Pharmacy Act of 1868. Actuated by like motives, and emboldened by the example of their British brethren, the druggists of Ontario seek a similar recognition; and backed up by the good sense and support of the medical profession, and the demands for justice and protection advanced by an injured and suffering public, we have the strongest hopes that by the close of the year the Pharmacy Act of Ontario will be one of the laws of the land.

Pharmacy in Quebec.

We are pleased to see that our eastern friends have not been idle, and that one of the first efforts of the Montreal Chemists' Association is in the direction of pharmaceutical education. A Bill to incorporate the Quebec College of Pharmacy has been drafted by the Council of the Society and has been placed in the hands of Mr. Carter, member for Montreal, who has consented to put it into parliamentary shape. We hope to hear of it during the coming session, and wish the undertaking every possible success. Our friends have got the right view of the question, rightly concluding that if the parent stem is crooked, yet unbending, the younger branches may still be trained into shape.

Proposed Law to Regulate the Practice of Pharmacy in the United States.

Amongst other matters discussed at the Annual Meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association, that of legislation engaged a large share of attention. A printed