

Pharmacy in England.

The P.A.T.A. and the Crusade against Cutting—Mr. Lionel Laurance in London—The Optical Trade as a Profitable Extra—Dispensing Charges—Should Medicated Lozenges be Retained in the New B.P.?—Bovril and Mr. E. J. Hooley—Decorated Tin Boxes in Pharmacy.

(From Our London Correspondent.)

The steady growth of the Proprietary Articles Trade Association is a matter of sincere congratulation to those chemists who handle profitless patent medicines. Many of the principal druggists have absolutely refused to budge from the position of charging the full price, but have felt it keenly when their customers have remarked that the brother pill lower down the street only charges so much, and intimate their intention of trading there. In respect to some thirty proprietaries, the position, thanks to the P.A.T.A., is now altogether changed, and one has no fear that a customer may go elsewhere and obtain them cheaper. No better proof of the real value of the association's work could be produced than the hysterical state to which it has already reduced one or two of the principal cutting companies. Boots' drug stores are to be found in the midland counties to the extent of some forty shops, and Day's southern drug stores occur pretty freely in London, and on the south coast. Both of these are already feeling sick, and one has hit upon the novel expedient of getting the public to sign a petition to manufacturers not to join the association. There is no doubt that if the movement is to be really effective it will have to win much greater support from the largest proprietary manufacturers. It is rather dispiriting to find that several of the firms that protested their objections to cutting, only a few years ago, are not yet on the list of supporters. Many are doubtless on the fence, and a good deal will depend upon the attitude of chemists towards the movement in the course of the next twelve months. So far the chemists have been by no means too enthusiastic towards an undertaking framed entirely in their interests, and which cannot possibly do them harm.

The name of Mr. Lionel Laurance, late principal of the Optical Institute, is well known to all readers of THE CANADIAN DRUGGIST, and they will doubtless be interested to learn that Mr. Laurance is now in London, and is giving his special course of instruction on optics in Messrs. J. Raphael & Co.'s establishment, 51 Clerkenwell road, E.C. I hear from Messrs. Raphael that quite a large number of chemists have entered their names for the course, and soon it is expected that the optical business will form a profitable addition to many a pharmacy. I may mention that Messrs. Raphael & Co. were recently turned out of their old premises in Oxford street, W., by the new Central London Railway, and have acquired much larger and more convenient premises in the Clerkenwell road. Here the manufacturing work is carried on side by side with the execution of special prescription

work. It speaks well for their enterprise that they should have promptly secured Mr. Laurance on his arrival in England from Canada, where the optical trade has been brought to a high degree of scientific excellence. Aluminium frames are one of the latest improvements in ladies' lorgnettes, introduced by Messrs. Raphael, and the same metal is being used in opera, marine, and field glasses. Their new sight test-case, containing spherical glasses and also single lenses, is a complete outfit for those entering the optical business, and is supplied in solid walnut, lined with satin, at the moderate price of \$25.

An interesting question is raised by a Midland chemist, Mr. R. D. Gibbs, on "How to arrive at dispensing charges." In a cogent and thoughtful paper he runs a tilt against all established methods and charges, and boldly suggests that every prescription should be charged on its merits. That is, according to the time, material, and apparatus employed. There is a good deal of sound sense in his remarks that in many instances the dose system of charging is unfair, and may be classed with the unsatisfactory method employed by medical men to arrive at their charges, viz., based upon the rental of the patient's house. It has often seemed to me that this unsatisfactory arrangement of prices is of far greater importance than chemists imagine. It is not merely a question of getting as much as you can—buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest is a good old-fashioned formula. But is that what we are doing when we make our dispensing charges suit the neighborhood? At any rate, if some simpler plan could be devised that would appeal to the intelligence of the public, a good step would have been made towards solving the problem of dispensing by doctors. At the present moment a householder has to choose between a visit from a doctor with medicine thrown in, as it were, at \$1 a time, and a 75-cent fee to the medical man, with 50 cents to the druggist for physic. Naturally, he prefers the former arrangement, although he is willing to agree that it is not the best.

Why should medicated lozenges still encumber the Pharmacopœia? is a question that might well be directed to the Medical Council. It is supremely absurd that page after page should be taken up with wretched formulae denoting to a fraction of a grain the quantity of sugar and powdered gum acacia to be contained in a lozenge. If anything of the kind is required at all, of which I have doubts, it would surely suffice to indicate the medicinal strength alone. How many English-speaking retail pharmacists manufacture a single lozenge from one year's end to the other? And, in spite of the B.P., we all know that most of the so-called B.P. lozenges can hardly claim to have been made in strict accordance with the letter of the formula. Since the considerable advance in price of Soudan gum acacia, nearly all the lozenge-makers have

favoured the other varieties, and, as there is no real reason why they should not, it only goes to confirm any contention that confectionery might be deleted from the new B.P.

The Bovril deal is causing a good deal of comment, and will give the concern an excellent advertisement. Briefly, it consists of an offer of Mr. E. J. Hooley, of Dunlop tire fame, to buy up the Bovril Company, lock, stock, and barrel, for the sum of \$10,000,000, and, as a guarantee of good faith, \$500,000 has already been paid. As the \$5 shares are quoted at about \$25, it will be seen that they are already valuable property. But Mr. Hooley's scheme is to refloat the company at the advanced sum of \$12,000,000, the difference between the two figures going into somebody's pocket after expenses are paid. There will be a rearrangement of capital, the creation of debentures, deferred and preferred shares, etc., and Lord Playfair will not appear amongst the new directors. It is not so very many years since I remember sending back a supply of Johnstone's Fluid Beef as unsaleable—there being practically no demand. Then, one fine morning, Mr. Johnstone registered the word "bovril," and proceeded to make it known by supplying hot-water cans of elegant shape to stand on small gas stoves, so that hot bovril could be supplied at any time. This caught on immensely, and a judicious amount of advertising, with a fair sprinkling of improved invalids' preparations, has done the rest.

Why do not the enterprising makers of tin boxes attempt to secure the ordinary druggist as a customer, but leave him to the tender mercies of the wholesale houses? Many chemists would prefer to supply Seidlitz powders in tin boxes, camphorated chalk, carbolic powder, etc., if he could buy the decorated tins at a reasonable figure. If he appeals to the makers, they blandly offer to make him six gross, but they will not make a stock article and keep it for the trade. Of course, the demand of the drug trade is small compared with some trades; thus the maker of the small decorated tins for carrying compressed tablets in the pocket supplies them in vastly larger quantities to the drapers as a receptacle for pins, etc. Still, there is room for a little enterprise in this connection, and the druggist would support the right articles, I am sure.

One of the partners in a large department store in New York city, that has achieved success by its progressive methods, gives this as a recipe for getting rich: "The surest road to success is to be honest, and all men will trust you; honorable, and all men will believe in you; industrious, and all men will have confidence in you; just, and all men will admire you. Be alert; save a part of what you earn, so as to be always independent; store your mind with useful knowledge, and the world is yours."