

amusing life-history of "rubbishin" was no doubt very little overdrawn, but his conclusions against new drugs as the "great burden" of our lives scarcely seem to be justified by his fanciful sketch. Dr. Broadbent, while more guarded in his remark, was no less severe upon the rage for new drugs which seemed to have taken possession of the profession. "When the drugs were recommended simply by an advertising chemist, it was humiliating to see their statements command general acceptance." In spite of Dr. Broadbent's cautious reservations, his remarks and those of Mr. Lawson Tait might well be understood to discountenance progress, and to discourage all original work outside the comparatively limited circle of familiar remedies. On the other hand, Sir E. H. Sieveking, in his address at the opening of the School of Pharmacy, spoke quite as emphatically upon the need of greater energy, perseverance and research. He remarked that within the last few years we had been indebted to the continent for numerous remedies which have been employed largely and beneficially in this country, but have not been discovered here. Curiously enough, he instanced one—chloral—which had previously fallen under the ban of Mr. Lawson Tait; Sir E. H. Sieveking considered it a matter for regret and for serious consideration that so much of the progress of modern pharmacy should reach us from foreign sources. If they attend to such advice at all, pharmacists might well hesitate how to frame a satisfactory line of conduct. They are urged forward by Sir E. H. Sieveking; they are told practically to work in the old grooves or not to work at all by Mr. Lawson Tait. Is all research to be paralyzed from the dread of its results receiving the appellation of "rubbishin," or are eager investigations to be continued on the lines followed abroad? If pharmacists be induced to follow Sir E. H. Sieveking's advice may they not lay themselves open to the charge of being "advertising chemists" when their results are published, and when they attempt to reap the reward of their labors? In our department, headed "Pharmacology and Therapeutics," we publish the experience of practitioners and observers in all parts of the world with respect to the action of well-known drugs, and endeavor to afford aid to our readers in forming an estimate of the value of remedies recently introduced.

The difficulty seems to reside chiefly in a misapprehension of the meaning of terms. In speaking of the value of any new drug, it is well to distinguish carefully between its therapeutic and financial value. The latter may be, and indeed mostly is, dependent upon certain purely business considerations, such as the constant presentation of an easily remembered name in attractive advertisements, but the therapeutic value of a remedy is not necessarily antagonistic to its financial value. In other words, although advertisements may push into notoriety many relatively worthless substances, it cannot detract from the activity of the many

possessed of valuable therapeutic properties. Whether it does more harm than good is another matter. Certainly many medical men instinctively withhold their confidence from new remedies, and the more they are pressed upon their attention the more they feel the dread of being entrapped by another fashionable craze. Still, to take only those mentioned by Sir E. H. Sieveking—chloral, antipyrin and its congeners, and sulphonal,—it may be safely asserted that these have survived their period of probation, but it is none the less true that each in turn has run the risk of being designated "rubbishin." The truth appears to be that undue haste in the publication of results, and undue eagerness to claim priority, will always discredit original research in any direction and this truism applies most particularly to new remedies. An energetic worker in original fields makes what he believes to be a genuine discovery, and the new substance is immediately dubbed anti something. Subsequent impartial investigations show, perhaps, that the original claim is as incorrect as the hundred other uses to which the remedy has been hastily applied, and then its fate is sealed. False to its name, false to the statements of the many who have welcomed it merely as a novelty which could be utilized for their own especial hobbies, it is speedily relegated to the limbo of useless matters. Frequently, we believe, this fate is undeserved, and might have been averted by a little more circumspection. There is, no doubt, a disinclination to reinvestigate a substance which has had its day of fashion. It is cast aside in favor of newer combinations, and its properties may have to wait a long time for recognition. Nearly every pharmacopœia has shown indications of curious waves of fashion, of prejudice, and of tardy justice. Remedies pass in and out of the official circle almost mysteriously; the exit, often the result of a temporary lack of appreciation, no more proves the uselessness of a drug than the frequently prolonged hesitation about its admission. It is simply set aside for further work, like a candidate referred to his studies, and if it is of any real worth it will go on presenting itself at intervals of varying length until the knowledge of its power to do good work appears beyond dispute.

The whole question of the future of pharmacy lies in a nutshell. New remedies are not to be desisted simply because they are new; they are not necessarily useless because they are advertised, but they frequently receive less than their meed of attention, simply and solely because the first statements concerning their powers are made prematurely. Although for a moment Dr. Broadbent spoke so strongly of the advertising chemist, the whole tenor of his argument is in entire sympathy with Sir E. H. Sieveking's wish that the future of research should be more firmly based upon slower methods. It is only by investigations which must be both painstaking and prolonged, and by careful consideration of every possible source of

error before publication, that pharmaceutical results can leave little room for sarcasm and none for scorn.—*Lancet*.

Druggists' Business Methods.

WHILE it is a well known fact that among druggists there are many excellent business men, it is probably true that in scarcely any other line of trade is there as little attention paid to the close and careful buying of goods. This comes in part from the fact that the pharmacist occupies a professional as well as a business position, and his qualifications for the professional side of his calling are independent of and sometimes antagonistic to the qualities which go to make an enterprising and successful merchant. It is also true that where the business is principally in the compounding of prescriptions and in the strict line of pharmacy, it is not a matter of very great importance what prices are paid for his drugs, inasmuch as their cost is a comparatively trifling matter, it being much more important that they be of the best quality. In these days, however, business is rapidly changing, and there are comparatively few of the old-fashioned apothecary shops, druggists finding it necessary, in accordance with the spirit of the times and the movement of business, to enlarge their line and to change their methods. In this condition of things it becomes necessary for the successful druggist to be a skillful merchant as well as an educated pharmacist, and attention must be given to the buying of goods to the best advantage, availing himself of the best discounts and lowest prices obtainable. It is obviously a matter of considerable importance whether by careful buying he be able to purchase a case of mineral water or of pharmaceutical preparations at an extra 5 or 10 per cent. discount, and the profitableness of his business will in many instances depend upon his management and skill in this regard. It is a well-known fact that in the present condition of the market there are better prices in most lines for those who look for them than for those who are simply content to pay the prices demanded by the houses with whom they regularly deal. For this reason it is the part of wisdom for druggists generally to give their best attention to the buying of their goods. The result of well-directed experiment in this direction by those who have heretofore given comparatively little attention to the matter, will, we are confident, be a pleasant surprise in the way of more advantageous prices and larger profits.—*Pharm. Record*.

MEM.—A fireman writes to say that if your pianoforte should catch fire the best plan is to play on it.

Neighbor—How does it happen that your oldest daughter has consumption, while your youngest daughter is the picture of health? They appear to be of exactly the same temperament. Hostess—My oldest daughter got her winter fashions from Paris; the other got hers from Canada.—*Amer. Exchange*.