

A GOOD SUGGESTION.

A late number of the *Pharmaceutical Journal* of London contains a paper by Mr. Schacht, of Bristol, on "Pharmaceutical Education in the Provinces," which, but for its decidedly local bearing, we should certainly transfer, entire, to our columns. We should like, however, to draw attention to an experiment in pharmaceutical education, made by the author of the paper, as it conveys a most useful lesson, which, if improved upon, would prove of incalculable benefit to our apprentices in Canada. The experiment is thus described by Mr. Schacht:—

"On the first Tuesday of last October I commenced a series of "Readings in Chemistry," and invited the attendance of the Assistants and Apprentices of my neighbourhood. Ten individuals, with more or less regularity, responded to my invitation. The book selected was Mr. Roscoe's 'Elementary Chemistry,' and the plan adopted was the following:—A portion, usually one of Mr. Roscoe's own chapters or lessons, was read by myself; the author's questions at the end of the book were then looked over, and each student was invited to prepare the answers in writing and bring them to the next reading. Our first business, then, at each meeting, was to go over these answers. I made that the opportunity to introduce any explanations of my own, unless specially questioned during the reading. By this method every point of importance was gone over three times,—first, at the original reading, then at home in writing out the answer, and again at the next meeting when the answer was reported. This was continued for the first three months twice a week and subsequently once a week, until the 1st of June, and so in eight months from the date of commencing we finished our book, with the following satisfactory result. An examination was held under the usual conditions. The candidates were ignorant of the questions intended to be proposed, and they answered them in writing without any reference to book, note, or individual."

The answers were forwarded to Prof. Attfield, Director of the Laboratory of the Pharmaceutical Society, who reported, in the most complimentary terms, on the ability displayed by some of the students; and in his letter to Mr. Schacht says: "I hope you will give publicity to your scheme, for I am convinced that, short of direct professorial instruction, and the actual performance of experiments, no method of learning is likely to be so successful; certainly, no method whatever is so practicable for men engaged in the practice of pharmacy during the greater part of the day. Not the least advantage of the system is the occasion it affords of free interchange of thought and feeling between the followers of a common calling."

From the above will be seen what may be accomplished by "a commonplace man"—as Mr. S. modestly expresses it—"under

commonplace circumstances;" and we would earnestly commend the plan to the consideration and imitation of principals in Canada. The facilities in this country for acquiring a proper training in the branches of science, involved in a pharmaceutical education, are of the most limited character; and even did such opportunities exist in our chief towns, not one in ten of our apprentices would be in a position to take advantage of them, by reason of the necessary expenditure of time and money. Here, however, we have a scheme which, by the exercise of a little enthusiasm and self-denial on the part of master chemists, might be carried into execution throughout the length and breadth of the land, with incalculable advantage.

The present time is an excellent one for commencing the "Readings;" and other subjects besides chemistry—as botany and materia medica—might be taken up; although, in the case of botany, it might be better to wait until the season is further advanced, when the collection of indigenous plants can be commenced, and thus additional pleasure and interest will be conferred upon this most delightful branch of study.

We trust that this suggestion will merit the notice it deserves, and that friends of the cause of education will take the matter in hand at once. We shall be glad to hear of and report progress, and by publishing any notices which may be required, will do all in our power to aid the enterprise.

WHAT TO STUDY:—IN ANSWER TO INQUIRING STUDENTS.

We have received numerous inquiries, from apprentices connected with the Society, as to what course of study they ought to pursue, in order to qualify themselves for the position which they expect, in future, to occupy, as chemists and druggists. Some of these inquiries are made on the supposition that certain qualifications will shortly be required by law, and that, in order to commence business, an examination will have to be passed, of a nature sufficiently rigorous to exclude those unfitted for their calling. We are well assured that such will be the case, and we hope and believe that the period is not far distant when a legal barrier will be erected, beyond which the uninitiated may not pass. In the meantime, however, our advice to our young friends is: Lose sight of all compulsory requirements; give honor and ambition a chance, by cherishing a love for the calling in which you are engaged, and resolving that you will earn the title of "Pharmaceutical Chemist" before you assume it; lose no opportunity for study; don't waste your evenings; keep a sharp eye on the manipulations of the day, and let nothing pass which you do not understand.

Thus will your daily work become a round of pleasure; and when, after the lapse of a few years, the time for examination comes round, you can step boldly forward and claim its honors as your right.

We feel we should be doing an injustice to a number of our young friends, if we allowed our readers to conclude that all the inquiries we have received were actuated by the dread of an examination. Such is, by no means, the case; the greater number belong to the right stamp, and were evidently prompted by right and laudable motives.

We purpose offering a few suggestions as to the course of study students ought to pursue; and though we are well aware that exterior helps, in the way of lectures and practical instruction, are of great advantage, yet, after all, by diligence and application, the self-taught student may render himself independent of such assistance. Let none feel discouraged because he may not happen to enjoy privileges of this nature. Many of our most eminent men have been self-taught men, and have attained a position amidst circumstances of the most adverse character.

A great deal of the success of the student will depend on the adoption and carrying out of a systematic method of study. A great fault is the attempting of too much at once. The result must be judged by the amount learned, and not the extent of the reading. Let no statement pass without thoroughly understanding it. By this means a habit of concentrating the mind will be acquired, which will render each succeeding difficulty of easier accomplishment. Impatience must be curbed, and a steady, plodding step maintained throughout. Let there be no skipping of disagreeable or dry subjects; no turning over of pages to see what is to come next. It is a much better plan to review than to anticipate; and the student will derive great benefit by making a retrospective examination of the previous day's lesson. The attempting of more than one branch of study at once will depend on the time at the disposal of the student. If the evening only can be employed in reading, one subject will be quite sufficient; if a portion of the day is allowed, another branch may be taken up. Chemistry and botany, or any other branches of somewhat diverse character, may be taken, with advantage, together, and in this way the mind will be relieved and refreshed.

If the student has not had the advantage of a classical education, it will be found necessary to devote some time to acquiring a knowledge of Latin. A thorough knowledge, although desirable, is not absolutely indispensable, as the terms employed in prescriptions are limited in number, and physicians seldom wander from the beaten track. Pareira's *Selecta e-Præscriptis*, which con-