

Pharmacy in England.

The Progress of Pharmacy In Great Britain
During the Queen's Reign.

(From our own Correspondent.)

The diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria is responsible for a good deal of looking backwards, and various articles have appeared in the magazines recording the progress that has been made in science, arts, and manufactures during the record reign. I make no apology, therefore, in following the fashion and in attempting within the space at my command, to describe something of the progress that has been made in pharmacy here during the sixty years.

There is always a fascination in trying to realize what were the conditions under which our predecessors lived and worked; the battles they fought to establish our liberty and independence; and what giant's work it was to throw off the yoke of medical interference, and build up a system of education and examination that has raised pharmacy from an unrecognized calling to a clearly-defined, State-acknowledged branch of medicine. Pharmacists are the lineal descendants of the old shop-keeping apothecaries, who obtained a charter in 1617 enabling them "to sell drugs and prepare and compound medicines according to physicians' orders and directions." From that time until early in the present century the apothecaries held precisely the position that the dispensing chemists hold to-day. Indeed, they suffered from the malignity of the narrow-minded physicians and surgeons because they ventured to practice minor surgery and prescribe over the counter. Besides this, the druggists, having separated themselves from the grocers, were obtaining a good deal of the apothecaries' trade, and this led to numerous attempts on the part of the apothecaries to control the unexamined chemists and druggists. The result was the establishment of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in 1841, with the express object of improving the calling of pharmacist by means of systematic education and adequate examinations. The first school of pharmacy opened in this country was that founded by the Pharmaceutical Society in 1843, and the *Pharmaceutical Journal* started as an experiment by Jacob Bell, who afterwards presented the copyright to the Pharmaceutical Society. The retail trade, as well as the wholesale, in these days was of a very mixed nature, whilst the so called "patent" or proprietary medicine flourished in spite of taxes on paper, advertisements, and a medicine stamp act that is in force to-day.

The society was fortunate in its early officers and staff. The president was William Allen, F.R.S., head of the firm now so well known as Howards & Sons, of quinine fame. Dr. Anthony Todd Thomson, M.D., was lecturer on botany; Dr. Pereira, on materia medica; Mr. George Townes, F.R.S., on chemistry; and Professor Redwood on pharmacy.

Mainly through the energy of Jacob Bell, who was then M.P. for St. Albans, the Pharmacy Act was passed in 1852, that extended and confirmed the powers of the society in educating and examining pharmacists and protecting the title of pharmaceutical chemist. The society had now a permanent habitation in Bloomsbury Square.

In 1855 methylated spirit was introduced, which enabled denatured alcohol to be used in the arts duty free. This has been a great boon to chemical manufacturers and in many other trades.

In 1862 Professor John Atfield was appointed director of the laboratory of the School of Pharmacy of the Pharmaceutical Society, which post he filled up to last year, when he retired. The first national pharmacopœia appeared in 1864, under the title of *British Pharmacopœia*, as previously the pharmacopœias of London, Dublin, and Edinburgh had been the various guides to the medical profession and pharmacists. Squire's "Companion to the *British Pharmacopœia*" came out first about this time, and was preferred to the *British Pharmacopœia* itself. In 1868 the amended Pharmacy Act was passed, which gave fresh powers to the Society by making it compulsory that after that date any one who desires to keep open shop for the purpose of retailing poisons and dangerous drugs must have passed the examinations prescribed by the council of the Society. It also embraced the poison question, created a schedule of poisons in two degrees, and directed how they were to be labelled and sold. But connection with the Society was quite optional, and all those who were in business before the passing of the Act were compulsorily registered and admitted, if they desired it, as members of the Society. Since then attempts have been made to obtain parliamentary sanction to limit and restrict the dispensing of physicians' prescriptions to qualified pharmacists, to regulate the educational system by establishing a curriculum: to stop company pharmacy and insist upon branch shops being under the supervision of qualified pharmacists. But owing to the congested state of private business in parliament, and the monopoly of nearly all spare time by government measures, besides the want of unanimity amongst pharmacists themselves, the Society has failed to add anything further to the statute book. The council have, however, added a research laboratory for the higher education of pharmaceutical chemists, and have rebuilt their premises, making them the handsomest of their kind in London.

The examinations have been remodelled and extended, and now it is decided to abolish the elementary examination in school subjects, and only accept, after 1900, the same certificate as is accepted by the medical, dental, and veterinary professions.

During this period the practice of pharmacy has altered as the fashion in medi-

cine changed. Fifty years ago the fluid extract was looked upon as a novelty and the capsule was not half appreciated, whilst blood-letting—and, therefore, the use of leeches—was steadily on the decline. The period of "elegant pharmacy" set in about twenty years ago, and a few liquors and concentrated mixtures made their appearance. The ferments, pepsin, pancreatine, and diastase were being generally tested. Then followed the compressed tablet, the triturate, the palatinoid, and so on, all tending to increase of self-medication that the public loves, and, although increasing the profit of the pharmacist at the time, it is doubtful if it is not undermining the prescribers' art. Nowadays the public, as well as the profession, not only require their medicines to be elegant, but they must be pleasant. The pharmacist has to triumph over incompatibility, and remove objectionable features from drugs without disturbing the therapeutical activity. Nor is this all; he must be prepared to assist the surgeon with the necessary antiseptic preparations or aseptic dressings. The season of serums and antitoxins, with organic extracts, seems to be thick upon us. Will the pharmacist of the future have to keep a bacteriological department as well as a dispensing counter? Be that as it may, his success in the future will depend upon the combination of business habits with scientific attainments and a determination to keep himself abreast of the times. This is the moral to be learnt from the history of the past. There is also the indisputable law of the survival of the fittest, that seems to apply equally to the pharmacist in pharmacy as to the physical welfare of man.

Injunction Granted.

An injunction was asked for recently by Thomas Hobson, on behalf of Archdale Wilson & Co., Hamilton, Ont., to restrain F. W. Merritt, of Brantford, from manufacturing and selling fly-poison pads which were said to be an infringement of the copyright held by the plaintiffs. The injunction was granted by Judge Snider.

The Pharmacologist is the name of a new quarterly publication, edited by F.E. Stewart, M.D., Ph. G., of Detroit. It is devoted to the interests of materia medica, pharmacy, and therapy, and the number before us, No. 1, Vol. 1, is full of valuable and instructive matter in these branches. From the editor's well known ability we can predict a successful career for the new journal.

REMOVING BLOOD STAINS.—Surgical instruments, sponges, and the hands of the operator, according to Dr. Blenkiser, are readily cleaned from blood stains by washing them in a tepid solution of tartaric acid, and afterwards rinsing them in water without soap.