

The Drug Trade in France.*

In France pharmacists are divided into two classes, pharmacists of the first class, and pharmacists of the second class. The length of time necessary for the taking of a degree in pharmacy is six years for either class. Three years of this period are spent in the laboratory of a pharmacy, doing practical work as an apprentice. The remaining three years are spent in undergoing a regular course of study in one of the French schools of pharmacy.

Before entering upon his collegiate course the applicant for the degree of pharmacist of the first class must have taken one of the following degrees. Bachelor of letters, bachelor of science, or one of three other degrees incident to the French system of education, for which there are no corresponding titles in the United States.

For the degree of pharmacist of the second class it is only necessary to produce a certificate of graduation from one of the French high schools. The course of study and the time and character of the examinations are the same for either class, except that for a degree for the pharmacist of the second class the graduate must be examined in the department in which he wishes to practise his profession. The French schools of pharmacy do not require a foreign student or graduate of pharmacy to follow a complete course of studies before awarding him a diploma. On the contrary, he is given credit for studies previously pursued, and permitted to come up for final examination after having attended the lectures on the most advanced branches. The Minister of Public Instruction, and not the faculty of the school, determines to which class the foreign student or graduate of pharmacy shall be assigned. To this official all applications have to be made, and to him full particulars regarding previous studies have to be given.

If the applicant be a graduate of a foreign school, more than one year's study is rarely exacted; although, in this, much depends upon the college which originally granted the degree. The English, German, and Austrian colleges of pharmacy, for example, are held in high repute, and graduates from these countries can readily obtain their degree in France. Graduates of American schools meet with more difficulty.

As French students of pharmacy are required to have taken certain classical

degrees before entering the college, foreign candidates for a French degree are obliged to furnish proof that they have taken equivalent degrees in their own country. In other words, a graduate of an American college of pharmacy, no matter how proficient, would not be given a degree in France unless he were a bachelor of letters or presented certificates of an advanced education at home.

The number of pharmacies is not limited. A pharmacist of the first class can establish himself in any city or commune by registering his name with the prefect or sous-prefet of the department in which the city or commune is located. A pharmacist of the second class can only engage in business in the department in which he received his diploma. If he desires to change the location of his pharmacy and remove to another department, he will first have to undergo another examination in that department and receive a new certificate of aptitude.

While the laws by which a pharmacist is governed are severe, and infractions render him liable to heavy fines, or perhaps imprisonment, he is carefully protected from unjust competition. In France no one but a duly qualified apothecary is allowed to sell, or offer for sale, any pharmaceutical compounds or preparations for the use of the sick, except in special cases. Although, according to the strict letter of the law, a pharmacist can only sell medicines ordered through a doctor's prescription by tolerance such articles as perfumery, fine toilet soaps, toothbrushes, etc., can be purchased in almost any pharmacy.

There are prescription drug stores, or pharmacies, and stores for the sale of crude chemicals (drogueries). It is not necessary to have a degree in pharmacy to open one of the latter, which deal solely in such articles as acids, borax, tartar, paints, oils, turpentine, camphor, etc. If the proprietors of these stores sell any pharmaceutical compounds or any of their drugs in medicinal weights, they are liable to a heavy fine. They can, however, sell certain articles of a poisonous nature for commercial or industrial purposes by carrying out the regulations prescribed by law. The list of poisonous substances is as follows. Hydrocyanic acid, vegetable alkaloids and other salts, arsenic and its preparations, belladonna together with its extract and tincture, chloroform, hemlock together with its extract and tincture, cyanide of mercury, cyanide of potassium, digitalis with its extract and tincture, tar

tar emetic, hyosciamus with its extract and tincture, nicotine, nitrate of mercury, opium and its extract, phosphorus, ergot, stramonium together with its extract and tincture, corrosive sublimate, cocculus indicus, and essence of absinthe.

The laws regulating the sale and use by druggists and manufacturers of the substances contained in the above list are practically as follows.

Anyone wishing to sell one or several of the poisonous substances will first have to make a declaration to that effect before the mayor of the commune and give the address of his establishment.

Chemists or manufacturers using one or several of the above-named substances in their business must also make a similar declaration. The declaration is entered in a register kept for the purpose and a copy of the entry given to the declarer. In case of the removal of an establishment a new declaration must be made.

Poisonous substances can only be sold or delivered to merchants, chemists or manufacturers who have made the above declaration. They may also be delivered to pharmacists, but only upon a written order signed by the purchaser.

All purchases and sales of poisonous substances will be entered in a special register numbered and signed by the mayor or a commissary of police. The entries are made immediately at the time of the sale. They indicate the nature and quantity of articles sold, together with names, professions, and addresses of the seller and purchaser.

Manufacturers employing poisonous substances in their business are also obliged to keep a register in which are entered the purposes for which the poisons are used.

The sale of medicinal compounds or remedies, the ingredients of which are well known to the proprietors, is absolutely prohibited in France. The law requires the inventors or owners of such remedies to communicate the receipt of their preparations to the Minister of Commerce, with a list of diseases to which they are applicable, and a statement of the actual trials to which the medicines have been submitted. The National Academy of Medicine then examines the composition of the remedies to ascertain if their administration might be dangerous in certain cases, if the remedies are good in themselves; if they have produced, or will still produce, beneficial effects on humanity, and the proper price to pay to an inventor of a remedy recog-

*American Consular Report.