

The International Pharmaceutical Congress of 1893, and Some Points in American Pharmacy.

From a paper by N. H. MARTIN, one of the delegates from Great Britain.

Since Mr. Martin intended to visit Chicago at the time of the Congress, he was, he said, appointed as a delegate from England to that meeting. It had been his second visit to the States, and had modified many of his former ideas and views. He did not intend, nor, indeed, was he able, to enter into details of pharmaceutical life, but rather to give an account of some of the general principles of American pharmacy. He should not mention any names of the various colleges and men and shops he had visited, but merely give some account of his views of them.

Mr. Martin then wandered from matters pharmaceutical to ideas of the discomforts of American travelling, and to the beauties of American scenery, and, after ten minutes, he returned to his subject by telling his audience how he arrived late at the meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association, and was soon welcomed on to the platform. He was surprised to find that printed copies of the papers read were circulated amongst the members directly the author commenced his paper. The visible effects were twofold. Firstly, little attention was paid to the speaker, since the paper could easily be followed in print. Secondly, the discussion was very critical and well maintained on account of the easy way in which the whole of the paper was before the audience at once.

The papers read were divided into three sections (1) scientific, (2) legal and educational, (3) commercial. The volubility with which many of these latter were read and discussed was remarkable, as was their great impracticability, said Mr. Martin. A peculiar custom was the frequent appointment of committees of three to settle trivial matters. Even the vote of thanks to the President for his address was referred to a committee of three. Many of the members of these committees never knew they were nominated until two or three months afterwards. The commercial papers were usually very entertaining, but very unprofitable, and this was a warning to us not to be too eager to introduce trade matters at our Conference. The publication of the seventh decennial revision of the United States Pharmacopœia was the most important of all their work. It was a matter of great satisfaction to see how the Pharmacopœia Committee of 1810, consisting entirely of medical men, had gradually altered until an equal number of pharmaceutical delegates and of medical men were on the Committee, and 56 delegates from the various pharmaceutical colleges were present at the meeting. After another extra pharmaceutical excursion to the World's Fair, the author said he thought it was a mistake to have held the International

Congress a week after the other meeting, since the members were hardly ready to seriously discuss pharmacy so soon again. The most notable feature of the Congress, in his opinion, was the presentation of the Hanbury medal to Professor Maisch, who was too ill to receive it in person. Mr. Carteighe, therefore, presented it to Professor Remington on his behalf. The 1,000 dollars voted towards the compilation of an International Pharmacopœia for potent remedies was also noteworthy, and a committee of three were appointed to communicate with the authorities in other countries. It is most essential that we should all have our potent remedies of identical strength. The discussion on the relation of pharmacists to sanitation and the working of the Adulteration Act led to the expression of the feeling that the pharmacist was the right man to deal with questions of hygiene, sewage water and adulteration. In England pharmacists needed to be far more chemists than they were at present to be able to take these matters into their hands. The Congress expressed its approval of a four years apprenticeship, and of an enforced curriculum. In regard to the general relations of education and examination, the author said there was no lesson whatever to be learned from our American brethren. The independence of pharmaceutical management in the different States causes no definite standard to be maintained, and the result is deplorable. In some cases where a distinction between a junior and a senior course is maintained, the latter is practically a repetition of the former. The diploma of a pharmaceutical graduate is thought very little of; so much so, that the educational section concluded that pharmacy boards should not accept the collegiate diploma in lieu of the State examination. Some of the colleges, indeed, are so lax that they will give a diploma after 15 months' training to men under 21. This appears to be done in order to gain fees and popularity. There is practically no training to laboratory work, two hours per week being a common enough time for this, and then three hours lectures every evening of the week. After the day's work is done lectures on subjects quite outside any branch of pharmacy are often given, and the astounding statement that two hours lecturing is to dispose of the origin of trade, botanic gardens, the practice of medicine, and the location of man is noteworthy. The pharmacy boards are appointed by the Governor of the State, and their duties are loosely defined, and their powers are absolute. The heavy salary to the secretaries indicate the way in which the posts are given. Politics and dollars seem, according to the author, to have more to do with the matter than pharmacy. The examinations are entirely theoretical, with the exception of a few drugs for identification, purchased from a druggist in the locality just before the examination. The examiners travel about from town to town and examine the candidates at an hotel. An example is worth giving. A

class of 31 students in one State, were examined in toxicology, materia medica, and prescriptions from 5 to 7 one day; in chemistry from 8 to 9 the same evening, and in pharmacy from 10 to 11.15 next morning. At 3 the examiners met, and 15 candidates were passed the same evening. Although all the examination was by means of papers, the examiners were three in number. In such States the whole system was merely a parody on Pharmaceutical education. The pharmacy laws were very lax and unsatisfactory. In one State, the law passed in 1889 said that no man but one duly registered could sell or dispense poisons, whilst an unqualified man could always be covered by the employment of a qualified man. Spirits were allowed by the Act to be kept for medicinal purposes (?) There was a great tendency to use the dollar fairly or unfairly, in order to get doctors to prescribe only a certain brand of goods, and the enormous trade in drinks was one of the worst features in American Pharmacy. The last shop he had visited was Mr. Francis', of 5th Avenue, where, he was glad to say, the soda fountain had been abolished, and only pharmacy was transacted. However, America had its great pharmacists as well as other places, and he would end by pointing to the names of Squibb, Parrish, Bedford, Remington and Maisch, men who made pharmacy in the United States.—*Mr. and Col. Druggist.*

A Pertinent Suggestion.

There is no better reading for a young man who is anxious to rise in the store in which he is employed than a good trade journal. In it are gathered brisk business items, discussions on commercial issues, and pointers gathered from the experience of the oldest and most tried merchants, that are of inestimable value to him. No matter how thoroughly he is posted as to his own trade and locality he will always find something in it that he can read with interest as well as profit. The clerk who does so soon gets on. He becomes, half unconsciously, better posted than his fellow employees. He knows the latest commercial news, and soon is appealed to by the others for this or that bit of information. Customers like to buy from him because he is so well posted, and by and by it comes that no matter what changes may be made in the personnel of the staff he is always a fixture until he gets a store of his own or an interest in the firm. And this is all due to his patient and intelligent perusal of the trade paper; for he who reads will learn, and knowledge is always power.—*Exchange.*

AFTER the ingestion of either rhubarb or senna the urine gives the bismuth reaction for sugar. (Phar. Zeit.). Both Knapp's and Nylander's solutions are reduced, and Fehling's solution is decolorized without causing precipitation with urine passed after the administration of rhubarb.—*Pharm. Cent.*