

import of patent medicines. Simple drugs are still admitted freely upon payment of the duty, but no patent medicine is allowed entry without obtaining each time special permission from the Medical Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Before such permission is granted it must be proved to the satisfaction of the Department that the production of the medicine requires elaborate work and expensive apparatus, that it is beneficial in its action, and that it can be transported long distances without injury to its efficacy. The applicant, in his request for admission, must state the composition of his article "in minute detail."

Cosmetics are examined only in case their labels or the accompanying descriptions indicate that they can be used for medical purposes. Cosmetics of which the labels and descriptions show that they are harmless in their effects on the skin, hair and gums are exempt from this formality.

This new Russian law appears to answer the object of its promulgators, for we are told that "the published list of medicines excluded from entry includes nearly every known pharmaceutical preparation."

The Swedish patent-medicine laws are over two centuries old (they date from 1688), and it is therefore not surprising to hear that they are now not generally enforced. None but qualified pharmacists may advertise medicines of any kind in the public press or import them. The importation of articles not considered exclusively as drugs—such as gums, liquorice, &c.—is free.

In Turkey there is no restriction upon the importation of patent or other medicines, with the exception of the payment of Customs duty, and quite recently the Turkish Government has prepared a law establishing a band or stamp tax of 10 paras ($\frac{1}{10}$ d.) for every bottle, box or package of medicine. This law is intended to be put in force as soon as certain pending negotiations between the Porte and several European Powers are brought to an end. In some instances, however, the stamps have already been affixed, and the $\frac{1}{10}$ d. tax is collected on all sulphate of quinine, which can only be imported at a few Turkish ports—viz., Constantinople, Salonica, Smyrna, Beirut, &c. The importation of chlorodyne, collodion, nitroglycerin, chlorate of potash, and cannabis indica cigarettes is altogether prohibited, but the fact that these drugs are sold at some shops shows that the prohibition is not very strictly enforced.—*Chemist and Druggist*.

Examinations by Boards of Pharmacy.

JOSEPH P. REMINGTON.

Read before the Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association.

What should be the true aim of Boards of Pharmacy in their examinations; and what should be the nature of the questions put?

These queries, for there are really two here, have been placed in my hands by the Committee for reply. It will be readily observed that if they can be satisfactorily answered and the laws executed that many of the perplexities of State Boards will disappear and the very desirable conditions of pharmacy laws fulfilling the expectations of their promoters will be experienced.

To the first query, "What should be the true aim of Boards of Pharmacy in their examinations?" the answer is: (1) To pass the qualified candidates; and (2) to reject those who are unfit to be licensed; and in the writer's opinion no other answer can be given. The true aim of Pharmacy Boards having been easily settled, the second query is encountered, and here the real difficulties are presented. "What should be the nature of the questions put?" Constructive ability is of a far higher grade of merit than that which is destructive; and, it is always easier to pick out flaws in questions, than it is to frame a set which will be thoroughly satisfactory.

The first answer to this question must be, "The nature of the questions put" must be such as will determine the candidate's fitness to have the license, and now the answer must broaden out so that it may cover the subject. An experience of twenty years in framing questions in pharmacy has possibly given the writer some qualifications to answer this question. In the first place, it becomes of the utmost importance for any examiner, no matter what class of candidates are before him, to divest himself of all idea of "getting up a lot of stumbers" or of framing the questions so that they may become pitfalls to the unwary. Every examining body should be held responsible for the character of the questions asked. Pharmacy Boards are unquestionably invested by the State laws with great powers. At their "ipse dixit" they may say to a young man, "Stand down," and down he goes and great is the fall; or if they say, "Come up higher, brother," the candidate is elevated and happiness is his portion.

With many of the Boards the questions asked are never published, and the candidate has no method of knowing how many of the questions have been satisfactorily answered. With some of the Boards, one set of questions serves for all of the candidates; if a certain proportion of the questions are answered, he can reach the mark set for assistants; if a larger quantity of the same questions are properly answered, he is entitled to rank as a proprietor.

Whether this method of determining a man's fitness has the only merit of economy, must be a matter of individual opinion. The writer has carefully examined many of the Boards of Pharmacy questions that have been published, and it must be said that the questions have mainly followed the methods adopted by the colleges of pharmacy; a number of the questions being recognized as having been done duty before at a college examination.

There cannot be any great objection to this, provided the questions selected are suitable; and this brings up the main question, what is a suitable question to give a candidate?

In the writer's opinion, the questions should be graded. To the candidate for the assistant's certificate, the questions should be mainly directed towards proving whether he is a safe person to be left in charge of the store during the temporary absence of the proprietor; for the certificate that he is given qualifies him in this respect. There are many questions which would be perfectly proper to give a junior student at a pharmaceutical college that are theoretical, and which presuppose him to have a knowledge of physics, mathematics or chemical reactions; for the junior student has just listened to lectures treating of these subjects and the college examination is for the purpose of showing how much of the lecture or instruction has been retained. But, many of these questions would be totally unfit to give a candidate for the assistant's certificate. The College as an institution has the right to ask of her students a certain grade of accomplishments, based upon the instruction given, before permitting the student to pass to a higher class; a grounding in elementary physics and botany, and pharmaceutical mathematics is essential in order to thoroughly comprehend the subjects which are to follow. But the questions which should be given to candidates for the assistant's certificate should be eminently practical. The doses of poisonous remedies, and indeed of all remedies, should form a prominent part of the examination. The relative strengths and characters of the classes of the pharmaceutical preparations form valuable subjects from which to select questions. Candidates should be drilled on the official names of the preparations, with the English names and synonyms.

In chemistry, the physical and chemical properties of the substances used as medicines form an inexhaustible field for suitable questions. The effects produced by mingling various chemical drugs furnish another source for important queries. Practical familiarity with the subjects should be shown by the recognition of specimens.

For the proprietor's examination, a much higher standard should be fixed. The ability to decipher prescriptions, not only those which are fairly well written, but ones which are difficult, should be a part of the examination. The proprietor should be posted upon properties, doses and physical appearances of official medicines; and he should know at least the doses and properties of the new popular remedies.

Finally, it is not too much to expect the proprietor to show his ability to carry on business by passing a practical examination before the Board, where his competency to perform the duties for which he is given a special license can be demonstrated thoroughly, in the presence of the body which gives him his authority.—*American Journal of Pharmacy*.