

the medicine as he thinks best, or according to the verbal instructions which he may have received.

A very good law provides that if any dispenser detects unusual or poisonous doses he shall demand (not merely ask as a favour) that the prescriber shall declare in writing on the prescription the purpose for which he intends it to be given and also state that he will be responsible for the result.

The prices for dispensing, with a few exceptions, are much lower than in England; but this does not apply to English prescriptions; Eighty centimes is about the average for an 8-oz. bottle, pills and powders in proportion; and this in a country where stores are unknown. The number dispensed makes up, to some extent, for the low prices. Many are certainly very simple, but we may say the same of English ones; though it is no use crying over spilt milk, I can't help thinking that if chemists all round in times gone by had been content with more moderate profit, many of these cutters would not now have been so flourishing, or even in existence.

There is very little counter-prescribing. The certainty of receiving all prescriptions does away with the desire for it, and though the pharmacy is the place people with slight ailments generally visit, and in case of street accidents usually rush to, it is because they expect to find a doctor there.

Most pharmacies have two or three medical gentlemen—some perhaps half-a-dozen (one I know has about twenty), who visit it regularly, some once, others twice, and some three times a day, as near fixed hours as their professional engagements permit, getting any notes that may be left, and prescribing for any patient who may be waiting for them; and it is a common thing for a person to ask, "Is there a doctor in?" and if not to wait for one.

Occasionally the doctor's prescription-form will have printed on it the list of chemists' at which he calls. If he gets any fee at all, it is only a small one, but the plan, as far as I could judge, seems to work well, and may often lead to a visit at the patient's house. It certainly relieves the chemist of a lot of trouble and anxiety.

The hours of business seem extremely long. 7 A.M. to 11 P.M. being about the usual thing; but it must be remembered that, at all events in the warmer weather, from about 12 to 5 there is practically no work done. Still, the hours are longer than necessary, every day of the week (Sunday included) is just the same, and there is no early-closing day.

The general tendency in the north of Italy I believe is to follow the English example and rest on the Sunday, but in Rome, as far as I could find out, the pharmacy in which I was

employed was the only one that was shut even part of the day.

The shops being lock-up ones, no one is on night duty. This is met in a very satisfactory way by the authorities dividing the town into districts, and in each division appointing a chemist who is open all night and paying the salary of the night assistant. Here is also always on duty, so to speak, a doctor, who is supplied with a couch to rest on, and a city guard—what we would call a policeman—so that in case of sudden illness anyone may at once ascertain where to obtain both advice and medicine.

The policeman accompanies the doctor both to protect him and to render what help he may need. In smaller places where the night service is not established, the pharmacist is by law bound to have a night-bell.

The first Italian Pharmacopœia was published in 1892. It is in the native language, the titles being in Italian, with the Latin name below. It contains, besides formulæ, various tables and laws relating to the business. Besides those laws already mentioned, a penalty of 100*l.* (with suspension of licence in case of repetition of offence) may be imposed for keeping bad or weak drugs. Another awards a penalty not exceeding 500*l.* or twelve months' imprisonment for supplying medicines not in accordance with the quality and quantity ordered; and the same penalty may be inflicted on a person who sells poisonous illegally, or fails to keep certain ones named under lock and key.

Whilst we have thirteen decoctions none are given in the Italian Pharmacopœia, but it is understood that unless specially ordered all are to be 10 per cent. Only two infusions (manna and senna and rhubarb) are given, compared with our twenty-eight; and although a great many infusions are ordered, the quantity of the drug is usually stated on the prescription, and they are always freshly prepared. The maximum doses of powerful drugs and the maximum quantity to be administered in twenty-four hours are given in a separate table. Doses of simple things, like tincture of rhubarb, are not given at all.

Generally speaking, the Italian pharmacist occupies a higher social position than his English *confrère*, and is looked upon as a professional man. Having passed the necessary matriculating examination, he commences to study at the university, the curriculum extending over four years. If at the end of that time he satisfies the examiners in botany, mineralogy, organic, inorganic, analytical and pharmaceutical chemistry, physics, and materia medica, he receives his diploma and the licence to open a pharmacy. The education, though not quite free, costs but very little. During