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DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE GENERAL DRUG TRADE AND TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF PHARMACY.

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The English Drug Market.

BY A CANADIAN BUYER.

Thinking some of your readers might like to know something of the ways of the English Drug markets and the present state of same, I have made a few notes on any experience there.

The whole packages of Drugs coming to London from the foreign markets are generally ware-housed, samples of contents are sent to brokers, and they are advertised for sale on Thursdays of each week, in Mincing Lane. Before the samples are sent out the packages are thoroughly inspected, and the state in which they are is carefully reported on. Packages which have been damaged by sea water are reported exactly to the degree of damage there may be; although the damage is generally in favor of the buyer, for instance, packages of Senna, should any of the covers show any sign of moisture from sea water though the Senna itself be hardly so, it is reported damaged and sold assuch. The packages themselves are on exhibition before the buyer for several days before the sale and you will see brokers inspecting carefully, and making notes of the amount they think the goods should bring. Then on Thursday at ten a.m. the auction begins, and if Englishmen are reported phenomenally slow, these sales are not such, as it is remarkable with what rapidity the goods are sold. It sometimes may happen as the sale is closing, that two may bid at about the same time, and the knock down is so quick, it is impossible to tell which is first. When this is the case, it is left to the vote of those

present as to who has the bid. The seats in the salesrooms are not sold, but when a party once secures a seat, he is supposed to retain it, and the seats are thus handed down from generation to generation. It is remarkable the accuracy of judgment which the brokers acquire in estimating the value of goods. One day I was sitting with a friend while the sales of ipecac were going on. A number of large ceroons were sold, and on the prices which they realized, and the value which had been put on them by several of the brokers before the sale, there was but a halfpenny advance. My friend said to me "ipecac has advanced a halfpenny to-day." This is but one instance of many, and it is a pleasure to note the pride the brokers take in striking the value at which the goods were sold. I think those gentlemen feel disappointed and aggrieved if the goods are sold at less than the values they had put upon them.

Then again there is another class of drug brokers. Many of them are merely shipping agents or general agents and know nothing whatever of the value or quality of drugs, but are open for business in drugs or anything else they can get. Before visiting the European markets, I have had letters soliciting business from so-called drug brokers. On going to see those, one would find himself in an office of a shipping or forwarding agency. You tell your business, and "Our drug man is not here to-day," is the answer. You will then be requested to call again, and make an appointment. This you do, and by this time are getting rather tired, but perhaps merely for the sake of seeing what all this means you call again, when the said 'drug man' will take your list for quotations. You question about the quality of the goods, "O, we will send you samples," you are told. Eventually you get the samples and quotations, when you find they are no better than those of the old reliable drug merchant, who can supply all your wants from his warehouse, who will attend to your packing and shipping and then if any complaints have to be made, they would go direct, and not through a third party.

The drug markets of London for other staples are much depressed, owing to the financial crisis which has been both east and west of them, their supplies for Australia, which is one of their important markets, being absolutely nil. The settlement of the Silver question being in abeyance, and the United States not

having yet recovered their usual vigor, the effects are being felt. Canada stands high, being the one English speaking country that has not felt severely the great financial crisis which has just passed. Material export sales have been cut off in the past by the Germans, owing to the low prices at which alcohol is sold in bond and their excellent regulations of the export department. Until lately one could not export manufactured articles of which spirit formed a part, unless he had a bonded warehouse, which would necessitate a very great expense. As it is now, the manufacturer can have such goods put up in packages, from one pint upwards in his own warehouse. The excise inspector comes around, gets the report of how much alcohol has been used in the manufacture of those preparations, and the rebate is allowed. This applies to tinctures, fluid extracts, essences, perfumes, spirits, etc. Had not some such regulations been made, the exports of such goods from England would have been wholly absorbed by other nations, more especially Germany.

Should a Physician Dispense His Own Medicine.

A liberal statement of the case is made by a physician in the form of an editorial article in the *Medical and Surgical Reporter*. Referring to the query, "Should the practitioner supply his own medicine?" the editor writes as follows:

In reply to this query it must be said that, in the present state of medical affairs, as a general rule, in a vicinity amply supplied with competent pharmacists, the practitioner has no right to compound or to carry drugs to dispense with his own hand to the patient.

Holy Writ says that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." That so is the trained, qualified pharmacist. Pharmacy and medical practice, while a close affinity subsists between them, are separate and independent branches of the healing art.

The physician in a large city, who carries and dispenses medicines, by that act loses caste, he does an injustice to his patient, and appropriates to himself what justly belongs to the druggist who depends largely on prescriptions for his support.

It is alleged that the physician saves the patient the expense of prescriptions and so retains him. But the fact is he fails in both. In very many cases he might as well dose his patient with frag-