Medical Economics and Public Health

Doctors Becoming Critical of Advertising Literature — It always has been amazing the character of propaganda that medicine and health vendors will try to stuff down the throats of doctors by direct mail advertising. Formerly, too many doctors swallowed these loose statements or threw them in their wastebaskets and thought no more about them. CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE is much pleased to have a constantly increasing stream of this kind of literature sent to us by our members with appropriate marginal notes.

In one recent example a so-called "specialist," in his confidential literature to doctors, puts a statement showing the remarkable curative properties of his remedy in that dreadful combination of diseases "T. B. and Malnutrition." The same remedy apparently also cures varicose veins and several other things. If it did not take too much space, we would be glad to publish in detail the caustic comments of the doctors who sent us this particular example, on the loose statements made by this propagandist.

Of course, men of this kind cannot buy space in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, although they very frequently have the nerve to try.

On Improving the Race—"Medical science is finding ways to protect the imperfect and incompetent from nature's ruthless elimination; and medical science preserves the imperfect and incompetent tendency to posterity, to further contaminate the race," says the Nebraska Medical Journal editorially. "It would seem that the efforts of the physician today are well enough calculated to operate to the good of the individual; but that they are clearly and powerfully opposing the development of a better, stronger, healthier, and saner human race. . . .

"But why shall we conclude that nature and evolution have ceased working when man's mind enters into the work? The operation of man's mind is as much a 'natural' phenomenon as the unfolding of a flower or the falling of a meteor. There is no dividing line between 'nat[illegible]' and the human brain. A skyscraper is as much the [illegible]ork of nature as a spiderweb; a surgical operation is no less natural than the building of a beaver's dam. The same set of rigid natural laws control them all."

What is Democracy?—According to "Woodbine Willie" (November Forum) "the problem of democracy is the problem of all government: how to secure a religious education that will make possible the social sublimation of the irrational and instinctive in man; how to tap adequate and untainted springs of public information; how to control and direct capital for the commonweal without destroying its essential character. How to solve this triple dilemma may become the despair of democracy."

According to Lincoln, democracy is "Government of the people, by the people, for the people." Another great statesman believes it to be "an optimistic belief in the power of an unfettered mob to govern itself." Best of all perhaps it is defined by Mazzini as, "the progress of all, through all, under the leadership of the wisest and best."

With such different explanations in the definition of democracy in government and the still greater confusion in trying to live up to any of them, is it any wonder that physicians and other special groups fall equally far short in either defining or living up to definitions that should obtain for their particular parts of government as a whole?

Women's Clubs and Medical Organizations—"For the coming year," says the Illinois Medical Journal, "a working program has been arranged with the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs which involves active cooperation with the Illinois State M[illegible]al Society for constructive health work from the com[illegible]ity angle.

Among projects to be fostered by the 70,000 federated clubwomen of Illinois, with the active aid of Illinois physicians, are a series of health conferences, the first to be given at Urbana, November 12 and 13, which will constitute a symposium of authoritative health counsel for laymen. At these conferences all speakers discussing disease, its prevention and cure, will be competent physicians recommended by the Illinois State Medical Society."

Estimated Cost of Sickness in New York—It is difficult to estimate the cost of caring for the sick and the loss of production caused by illness. "In New York City alone," says Thomas Riley (Long Island Medical Journal), "the hospitals and dispensaries spend more than $25,000,000 a year, and the physicians are paid $25,000,000 more. Probably $25,000,000 more are spent by our charitable health and relief agencies. The loss in wages and production of goods caused by sickness is beyond our present knowledge, but it may easily equal the cost of caring for the sick, giving us a grand total or more than $75,000,000 that sickness costs us in a single year in this city."

Wonderful When at Her Best—The nurse is not a physician, but at her best she is the helpmate and assistant of the physicians in her territory. It is not the duty of the county nurse to cart people off to specialists unless directed to do so; to negotiate half-price terms for work for people well able to pay; to waste her sympathies and energies on ne'er-do-wells, who court unmerited attention and who thrive on pauperization.—Nebraska State Medical Journal.

Nutradiet — Physicians, hospitals and other health agencies will join us in welcoming Sussman, Wormser & Co. to our advertising columns. Their new pack of Nutradiet Canned Fruits (packed without syrup) is a worthy attempt of manufacturers and wholesale merchants to meet the newer scientific requirements in reliable food products.

We commend the claims for Nutradiet to the consideration of all persons interested in nutrition and dietetics.

Belgium Physicians and State Medicine—"The sixteenth congress of professional medicine (Belgium) proclaims anew the right of a workman *employed by either a public or a private administration to choose his physician,* and has decided to work energetically toward the realization of this reform," says the Belgium correspondent of the Journal A. M. A. "For the time being, however, the congress has decided to support the claims of the appointed physicians; that is, the periodic revision of the lists of those who have the right to give treatment, the filling of vacancies, and the formation of a joint commission for the purpose of introducing reforms in the medical service of the railways."

Medical Journalism—Some time ago an article (New York Medical Journal and Record) said medical journalism was characterized "by loose thinking, sloppy construction and half-baked ideas, and added that the medical editor, as a rule, is a creation of circumstances and a misfit in the profession, who is obliged to eke out a half-existence as an underpaid compiler of medical thought with which in its broad sense he is relatively unfamiliar."

Other medical journals in this country and abroad have made interesting editorial comments on the statement. The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal says that "It is unquestionably true that there are too many medical journals published, and particularly in this country; it is also an undeniable fact that, in the medical profession, ability and success are measured largely by literary productiveness. Much of this is poor and it must find its outlet, which is not always in the poorer journals. To check this tide of publication would be an impossibility. . . . Authors will continue to bud like leaves through the hidden powers of nature, and the pruning must be done by the inexorable shears of the editor. In the editors' hands lies the future of medical journalism; if they are fearless and without favor a valuable type of literature will be fostered; if they seek only to fill

fair, white paper with the printed word, much of the criticism of the Medical Journal and Record will be justified. . . . Many editors carry on their editorial duties, not as a substitute for work in which they are misfits, but as a fitting complement to meritorious professional work of which they realize the breadth and dignity. They are not loose thinkers or half-bakers of ideas; they are not creations of circumstances or misfits in the profession. They are men of judgment and sturdy character who are perpetuating the ideals that they have found in a profession of ideals."

Gelatine in Diets—The dietetic importance of pure, plain, granulated gelatine has attracted so much attention, and the demand for more information has reached such a volume, that the laboratories of the Charles B. Knox Gelatine Company, who are extensive advertisers in medical publications, have prepared a book of dietetically correct recipes with gelatine for diabetes, nephritis, high blood pressure, gastritis, gastro-intestinal disorders, fevers, constipation, obesity, and general malnourishment in infants and adults.

The recipes have been most carefully worked out under authoritative auspices, and with each recipe is given a quantitative analysis of carbohydrates, fat, protein and calory value.

The book will be mailed upon request—postpaid and free of charge—by the Charles B. Knox Gelatine Company, Johnstown, New York, to any physician or dietitian who requests it. Why not send for it?

Financial Information and Service—The Anglo London Paris Company have been for some time giving members of the medical profession good financial advice in paid space in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. They offer to serve you. Why not try them? They are helping to support your journal.

Other banks and financial advisors who are old friends to our members through advertising are Wells Fargo Bank and Union Trust Company.

Silent Call Signal System—We are glad to call attention of hospitals and other health agencies to the offerings of C. F. Hartung Company, Los Angeles, in the advertising pages of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. The Hartung Hospital Silent Call Signal System is an excellent one, and it will be worth your while to consult them before placing your order.

The Doctor Who Reads the Latest Medical Books—It is worth the while of all our doctors to read the page advertisement of The Emporium under this heading in this issue. CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE feels that, in encouraging our two good medical book stores (The Emporium and J. W. Stacey), both of whom are advertisers in the Journal, we are rendering a distinctive and definite service to the cause of better medicine. Either of these good advertisers will not only secure any book published in any part of the world at any time for any doctor, without red tape, but they stand ready to serve him in a good many ways.

Another Step in the Reduction of Hospital Costs—The announcement of the Oaks Sanitarium, published elsewhere in this issue, is a step in a somewhat unique and interesting effort to bring the cost of hospital care of curable tuberculous patients who cannot afford to pay the full costs of such service within their means. The principle underlying this movement is, that the sanitarium has donated the land and the services of the medical staff free, in a new building to house twenty patients who are to pay $3 per day for complete service. The building itself has already been largely subscribed, and no doubt will be completely so in a reasonable time, by citizens who are interested in the problem of economical service to the sick.

Doctor Voorsanger feels that, with a building donated by the public and medical service donated by himself and his staff, and by a careful prorating of other fixed charges connected with such a building, he can and will serve—and serve well—patients of limited means at $3 per day. This is frankly an experiment in medical economics that will be watched with a good deal of interest by all persons engaged in the work of hospital betterment.

What a Fee!!—Health News, an official publication of the New York health board, in discussing physical examinations for school children believes that it is not generally known that a physician is entitled to a fee for examinations for working certificates to school children. The Compulsory Education law states:

Fee for Making Physical Examinations—Except in a city of the first class and of the second class, *a fee not exceeding 50 cents* shall be paid to the physician designated by the board of health for the physical examination required by the provisions of this section, and this fee shall be a charge against the city, town or village where the child resides.

A good, fast, hard-working physician could make almost as much as a day laborer at this job.

"I do not intend, for one moment, to belittle specialization, or group practice, or the city doctor. I sincerely believe that the medical education today is better than ever before," says Roland Breuer (Kansas Medical Journal). "These all have their indispensable place in the practice of medicine. *What I do wish to do is to emphasize the necessity of the beginner, whether he be mechanic, carpenter, lawyer or engineer, to apprentice himslf to a master mechanic for some years.* Especially so in the case of the physician, for he is mechanic, carpenter, lawyer, engineer, and more—minister and healer.

Wholesaling Medicine—The organization of corporations to conduct periodic medical examinations and to otherwise practice medicine according to business methods is coming rapidly to the fore as THE big problem of the medical profession. In an editorial on the subject (Journal of the Kansas Medical Society) it is stated, among other interesting points, that "a great many fortunes have been made in the patent medicine business, and when it has been found that better returns may be made in promoting scientific medicine, there will be no lack for capital. Corporations will be formed for the exploitation of popular surgeons and popular physicians, singly or in groups, who will be secured under contract and at salaries that will seem to justify them in ignoring any ethical regulations organized medicine may propose."

NOTES FROM THE CALIFORNIA BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

Another Law That Can't Be Enforced—We do not know of a single instance where one of the so-called Chinese herb doctors who advertise extensively in various sections of California have a license entitling them to practice in this state.

So far as our information goes, none of these Chinese herb doctors has any particular training. In fact, we understand from a history of the Chinese that these individuals need only announce themselves to be a doctor, and that they need have no special training or education.

Our attention was recently directed to an article printed in the Dearborn Independent of August 9, 1924, entitled "How Chinese Quacks Wax Fat"; also, the Dearborn Independent of August 30, 1924, entitled "Stream of Patients Flow to Orientals."

Reports have come to us that various Chinese herbalists in this state are in some instances engaged in the abortion business, and in some other instances their store is apparently conducted as a blind for the sale and distribution of narcotics.

It would seem apparent in some localities that underground influence makes it impossible to convict Chinese herbalists of violation of the laws of this state.

"Nothing should be taken for granted in a medico-legal case—not even the fee," says Sir John Collie (The Practitioner). "More mistakes are made, and reputations lost, through a slovenly habit of assuming things than through ignorance."