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FRANK KRAFT

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The American Physician

OCTOBER, 1908

FRANK KRAFT, M. D., EDITOR, CLEVELAND, OHIO

A SERIES of articles on the composition of secret remedies has been published.

* * *

AN inquiry of the kind is, from the analytical point of view, tedious and often difficult; the analytical chemist can easily and quickly identify the nature of inorganic salts in a mixture or powder, and estimate their amount, and is able also to recognize any alkaloids present; it is otherwise, however, with vegetable extracts and coloring matters, for which pharmaceutical science has not yet been able in all cases to supply easily applicable and conclusive tests.

* * *

OF the accuracy of the analytical data published there can be no question; the investigation has been carried out with great care by a skilled analytical chemist who has controlled his results in various ways, one being that in every doubtful case the formula obtained by analysis has been tested by making it up and comparing the appearance, taste, and physical properties of the imitative mixture with those of the secret preparation sold to the public.

* * *

IN these articles care has been taken to reproduce the claims and exuberant boasts of the venders, and the contrast between them and the list of banal ingredients which follow is startling.

* * *

THIS juxtaposition of analytical facts and advertising fancies is instructive and sometimes entertaining, the fancy is so free and the fact so simple. To take an instance from one of the secret remedies mentioned in the article published this week. "An absolute specific for all eye troubles and diseases," which "requires great skill in making," turns out to

be a very ordinary red oxide of mercury ointment, and, in spite of the fact that it is said to be "composed of costly ingredients," the actual cost of the material is too small to be expressed in figures.

* * *

ANOTHER contrast between fancy and fact is that between the contempt expressed by the advertiser for the knowledge of the medical profession and the sincere admiration he displays in selecting more or less old-fashioned remedies, some still very commonly used, others already discarded for better by the majority of medical men.

* * *

ONE cure for deafness is an emulsion of oil and glycerine in water, with a little soap, probably added in the form of soap liniment; another, advertised by a person whose studies in physiology and medicine enabled him to cure himself, turns out to be a mixture or emulsion of glycerine and oil, with a little ether and perhaps a little borax in water, but the patient is also advised to use an india-rubber contrivance as a "drum support."

* * *

IT cannot be said that the concoctors of these mixtures and powders and ointments show any particular skill in the compounding of drugs. They recall to mind the estimable Major in "Jack Spurlock, Prodigal," and appear very indifferent to taste and appearance. Some perhaps count on the belief, common among the poorer classes at least, that the nastier a drug the more effective it is. There is at any rate the excuse for this foible that the effort to subdue the repugnance to the draught produces a glow of virtue which may perhaps have a certain stimulating effect on the mind; the patient having not only spent his money but suffered some discomfort, is anxious to justify his faith by assuming himself to be the better for the double sacrifice. It is, however, not only the poorer classes of the community who have a weakness for secret remedies and the ministration of quacks. The well-to-do and the highly-placed will often, when not very ill, take a curious pleasure in experimenting with mysterious compounds. In them it is perhaps to be traced to a hankering to break safely with orthodoxy; they scrupulously obey the law and the Church and Mrs. Grundy, but will have their fling against medicine.

USUALLY, however, people of these classes take to some system. It used to be household electricity or hypnotism or some eccentricity of diet; nowadays it is more often Christian Science. The quacks have taken advantage of this love of heterodoxy to establish direct personal relations with persons attracted by their advertisements.

* * *

SOME of the preparations for deafness that are described illustrate well the elaborate means adopted in some cases to induce sufferers to adopt the articles recommended, and, by asking for reports on their symptoms and progress, ostensibly to facilitate personal attention to their requirements, to extract from them some statement with regard to improvement, real or imagined, which can be separated from its context and converted into a "testimonial" to aid in obtaining fresh victims. In the articles now reported on, as in those previously dealt with, the disproportion between the price charged and the cost of the ingredients would perhaps be a useful eye-opener to the public who waste money on such things if it could be brought to their knowledge in such a way as to secure attention.

—At a special meeting of the Executive Committee of the American Institute of Homeopathy held in the Coates House, Kansas City, Mo., on Monday, August 17, 1908, the following Preamble and Resolutions were adopted:

Whereas, Our beloved Secretary, Frank Kraft, M.D., has entered into the great transition from his earthly labors into his eternal rest, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Executive Committee of the American Institute of Homeopathy would place on record the very great loss we have sustained. His hearty belief in the principles of Homeopathy combined with his clear-cut ability to express these beliefs made him, at all times, a fearless and uncompromising antagonist. His genial and lovable nature made him the lasting friend of all who came to really know him.

Resolved that these Resolutions be placed upon the minutes of the American Institute of Homeopathy and a copy be sent to the family of Dr. Kraft, and also be published in the medical journals.

(Signed)— WM. DAVIS FOSTER,
 THOMAS H. CARMICHAEL,
 J. HENSLEY,
 J. RICHEY HORNER,
 THOS. FRANKLIN SMITH,
 J. H. BALL,
 Executive Committee.

**THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE AMERICAN
ELECTRO-THERAPEUTIC ASSOCIATION.***

BY HERBERT F. PITCHER, M.D.

Ladies and Gentlemen and Fellows:

It is with feelings of pleasure and gratification that I greet you all here to-day, for I know every member present has made a great effort, a great sacrifice to come here; not from curiosity or to seek pleasure, but for an earnest purpose and to keep out of the rut. We come here with the purpose of giving our best thoughts, and taking away with us the best thoughts of others.

I have letters from members who say they receive more help and inspiration from attending the meetings of this Association than from all the other medical societies to which they belong. If members who annually attend these meetings find them so valuable, why then do we not have a larger attendance?

I have realized for a long time, that although this Association is valuable to a few, yet as a national body, as our name implies, we fail in our mission.

We are a therapeutic society, the one missing link in the practice of medicine. All of the other departments are making satisfactory progress, but when a remedy is sought the profession throws up its hands in despair. We could select a dozen drugs from the United States Pharmacopeia, and practice medicine as successfully as with the thousands of official remedies placed within its sacred pages. The world's most prominent and broad-minded physicians are to-day drug nihilists. Dr. Frank Billings says, "Modern Medicine has established the fact that specific medication for disease is very limited. The specific sera, used as antitoxins and bactericides, organo-therapy in a very limited field; quinine in malaria, and mercury and the iodides in syphilis, comprise the list." A rational use of drugs, in simple form, to stimulate or to maintain the physiologic function of organs embarrassed by unhygienic habits, by an acute infective process, or partially crippled by a morbid anatomic process is the chief reliance of the physician to-day. Do not understand me to say

* Presidential address. Read before the eighteenth annual meeting of the American Electro-therapeutic Association in New York, September 19, 1908.

there is no place for drug therapy. It will always occupy a most useful place at the sufferer's bedside. The man who starts in general practice without his pill box will soon discover his need. But the physician of the future will use fewer drugs and more brains, his training will be more complete, his resources greater.

His laboratory is at hand where bacteriological examinations are made to aid or confirm his diagnosis; also microscopical and chemical examinations, the study of the blood corpuscles, the estimation of hemoglobin, the variations in blood pressure. Radiographic films will disclose the presence and location of foreign bodies, the position of fractured and dislocated bones, incipient pulmonary tuberculosis, cardiac enlargement, gall bladder and kidney calculi, and many other pathological conditions; and the incandescent lamp will light up the different cavities and orifices of the body. But with all of this armamentarium let him not neglect that which was the stock in trade of the old-time physician—observation. Only he who has practiced medicine for many years, knows its value.

The present generation should be very thankful that the science of medicine is doing so much to prevent sickness and preserve life.

In place of the drug of which we know little, and the action of which we know less, we have the different electrical currents which are applied directly to the diseased conditions; the Roentgen ray, radium, phototherapy, vibration therapy, hydrotherapy, the artificial hyperemia methods, psychotherapy—of which we hear so much and know so little; the antitoxins and vaccines with the opsonic index, a method which is gaining a firmer foothold as experimental research broadens.

The animal extracts also fill a useful place in many pathological conditions. In looking over the pages of the journal of that great representative body of medical men of America, one is struck with the dearth of remedial measures. Hygiene, preventive medicine, pathological findings, bacteriology, etiology, and diagnosis are all great and essential studies, but the sick man asks with reason, "What are you going to do for me?" A doctor measured out two portions of medicine, and remarked to the patient, "If No. 1 does not cure you take No. 2." The patient aptly replied, "Why not take No. 2 first?" Sick people want the very best remedy, and if we do not treat them

successfully they are going to some other doctor. This brings us to the problem of how to become successful practitioners. The quality of success is not meted out to some few fortunate individuals. "It is within ourselves that we are thus and thus." "Luck" means desire and determination; the will to do and dare, to see the opportunity and grasp it with bulldog tenacity.

The very best that is in a man must go into his work. Ability, skill, and conscientious effort must not be grudgingly expended. Every moment must contain the indulgence of a wish; must be a stepping-stone of an ambition. The best skill and strength invested in the effort will return dividends in an increase of skill and strength for future work. This means success.

The ultimate aim and duty of the true physician is to prevent disease and cure sickness. The great awakening in this country to sanitary measures is already having a beneficial effect. Our profession is the legitimate medium through which sanitation and prevention of disease is disseminated. We are not only physicians, we are teachers and philanthropists. We are the only profession who freely give away our own livelihood. Our incomes may not increase, but our glory as humanitarians will constantly grow brighter.

In spite of our watchful care and teaching, sickness will always be with us. In our fight against disease we are free to choose any method, any remedy known to the world. We who are assembled here, who have delved deeply into the lore of the art and science of medicine, sincerely believe we are studying the best method for relieving the ills which flesh is heir to.

Medical science to be useful must be practical. We are dealing with human beings, every one a little different from the other, consequently we cannot treat any two persons just the same, although they may have a disease which is called by the same name. Thus must we study not only the disease but each particular specimen of the human family.

In becoming electro-theraputists, we do not necessarily neglect any remedy true and tried. We should keep in mind all useful and practical remedies from the time of Hippocrates; for there is always a time for everything. Success in the practice of medicine lies in close observation and the alertness with which the physician applies the right remedy at the right time.

There is an old belief that nature furnishes a remedy for every ill. In that belief I fully agree, for who would have believed years ago that electrical forces would have accomplished the wonders they are doing to-day? Who could have imagined the miracle of the Roentgen ray, the results of phototherapy, and that mysterious substance known as radium which has upset the theories of the savants of all ages? We think of all of those great discoverers from Franklin, Galvani, and Faraday down to Prof. Roentgen, Niles Finson, and the Curies, and we wonder upon whose brow is fame next to place a laurel. We are all workers, investigators along lines that may bring to us discoveries which may help to mitigate the sufferings of our fellow-beings. Let us then continue our work with the true scientific spirit. Although we may not become famous ourselves, we may be instrumental in helping to build that monument to our profession, the noblest in the world, the most useful and self-sacrificing, the monument for the alleviation of human suffering than which there is nothing nobler, nothing greater.

Electrotherapy is a progressive science; we are as yet beginners in this great study. We do not expect to reach perfection, we do not expect to accomplish the task of placing before the world a remedy which will cure all ills, but every man is expected to do his duty, to be one of the builders of this noble monument. Therefore, gentlemen, with this high conception of our profession for a standard, let us work with a will and the single purpose of elevating the practice of medicine to the science of medicine.

This Association was established eighteen years ago and as you are all aware, it was the first of its kind in existence. Now there are several societies, not only in this country but in other parts of the civilized world. In 1905 the International Congress of Physio-Therapy was formed; last year it met again in Rome, and the next meeting will be in Paris. In reviewing the transactions of those meetings and noting the distinguished representatives from all parts of the globe, one gets some idea of the rapid advancement that electrotherapy is making.

In this country we have several societies; one of the latest to be formed, and I may say the most prosperous, is the New England Electro-Therapeutic Society, of which we are justly proud. All of the members of these branch societies should be enrolled