

## The Propaganda for Reform

IN THIS DEPARTMENT APPEAR REPORTS OF THE JOURNAL'S BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, OF THE COUNCIL ON PHARMACY AND CHEMISTRY AND OF THE ASSOCIATION LABORATORY, TOGETHER WITH OTHER MATTER TENDING TO AID INTELLIGENT PRESCRIBING AND TO OPPOSE FRAUD ON THE PUBLIC AND ON THE PROFESSION

### SINGLETON'S EYE OINTMENT AND OTHER NOSTRUMS

The letter quoted below, from a layman in Oregon, is typical of those received by the Propaganda department from the general public. It is reproduced and answered because, in the answering, certain facts may be brought out that may be of interest to the medical profession.

"In looking over and re-reading your valuable work 'Nostrums and Quackery' I see no mention made of the alleged three-hundred-year-old British eye remedy, 'Singleton's Eye Ointment' nor 'Congreve's Elixir for Consumption.' Neither is the analysis of Swift's S. S. S. Remedy given nor 'Absorbine,' not a word about the remedies of Dr. Miles of Elkhart—his 'Nervine,' 'Anti-Pain Pills' and 'Heart Cure'; nor the 'Dr. Blosser Catarrh Remedy Company' of Atlanta, Ga. I should like to know the composition of the above mentioned remedies.

"How much I would like to see you organize a great campaign and print large bills exposing these frauds and have them on bill-boards in cities and your information distributed in form of pamphlets from house to house.

"In 'Nostrums and Quackery' you do not mention the 'Enk Tissue Remedies' nor 'Bon Opto' for the eyes. What is the composition of 'Tanlac' put up by the Cooper Medicine Company and 'Yellow Minyol' for the scalp put out by the Blackburn Products Company?"

"Singleton's Eye Ointment" is not dealt with in "Nostrums and Quackery" because the stuff has but a limited sale in the United States; it is a British nostrum. It was analyzed by the chemists of the British Medical Association in 1909 who reported it to be essentially a mixture of lard, Japan wax and purified cocoanut oil with 4 per cent. of beeswax and 7.4 per cent. of red mercuric oxid. This analysis is recorded in Street's book "The Composition of Certain Patent and Proprietary Medicines" published by the American Medical Association. "Congreve's Elixir for Consumption" was also omitted from "Nostrums and Quackery" because the stuff is sold almost entirely in the British Isles or British possessions. It, too, has been analyzed by the chemists of the British Medical Association, who reported the presence of over 28 per cent. of alcohol by volume with only 2.6 per cent. of total solids, of which about 1 per cent. was sugar and 0.5 per cent. resinous constituents, with a little tannin, coloring matter and extractives. This formula also is given in Street's book.

"S. S. S." or "Swift's Sure Specific" is not discussed in "Nostrums and Quackery" (which came from the press in January, 1913) but is dealt with in more recent publications. An article on the product will be found in the pamphlet "Miscellaneous Nostrums." In the same pamphlet will be found articles on "Absorbine," "Miles' Heart Treatment" (with incidental mention of "Miles' Anti-Pain Pills") "Bon Opto" and "Tanlac." "Miles' Nervine" is the subject of an article in the pamphlet "Epilepsy Cures," while the composition of "Yellow Minyol" as found by the chemists of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station is given in the pamphlet "Cosmetic Nostrums" also published by the Association.

The Blosser concern was dealt with by Mr. Adams in his "Great American Fraud" series (reprinted by the Association); the report of the North Dakota state chemists to the effect that this "catarrh remedy" is a mixture of chamomile flowers, aniseed, cubeb and pepper, is briefly quoted in Street's book.

The "Enk Tissue Remedies," while on record in the files of the Propaganda department, have seemed to constitute

too insignificant a piece of quackery to warrant the preparation of any article on them. While the Association does not have large posters on the bill-boards exposing the nostrum evil, it does have on sale educational posters on the subject and these are used to no small extent by individuals and organizations interested in bringing home to the public the menace of the nostrum. While, too, the Association does not distribute its pamphlets on the nostrum evil and quackery from house to house, nevertheless, in the past few years over a million pamphlets and books dealing with this subject have been put in the hands of the public.

### KLINE'S NERVE RESTORATIVE

A physician in South Carolina, writes:

"I am anxious to learn the chemical composition or formula of 'Kline's Nerve Restorative'; also its therapeutic properties, if any. I was consulted recently by a patient regarding the preparation and, unfortunately, could only inform the patient—to quote a recent and very pertinent editorial in a most valuable medical journal that possibly it was a preparation 'founded on 5 per cent. banalities of elementary science and 95 per cent. of pseudo-scientific flapdoodle,' and was not noted for any special therapeutic properties."

"Kline's Nerve Remedy" is one of a group of alleged epilepsy cures investigated by the Propaganda department and analyzed by the A. M. A. Chemical Laboratory in 1915. At that time it was reported, of the Kline nostrum, that: "Essentially, each 100 c.c. of the solution contains approximately 8.7 gm. ammonium bromid, 9.2 gm. potassium bromid and 8.0 gm. sodium bromid. Calculating from the bromid determinations each meal-time dose, one teaspoonful (1 fluidram), contains the equivalent of 17.2 grains potassium bromid, and each daily dose (5 teaspoonfuls) corresponds to 87.0 grains potassium bromid." The article on Kline's remedy, as well as the articles on other so-called epilepsy cures, have been brought together in one pamphlet ("Epilepsy Cures," price 10 cents) prepared and issued by the Propaganda department of THE JOURNAL.

## Correspondence

### MEDICAL VETERANS OF THE WORLD WAR

#### An Appeal to Medical Members of Selective Service Boards

To the Editor:—Immediately on the termination of hostilities in November, 1918, members of the medical profession on active service in Washington recognized the need of an organization to perpetuate the principles and fellowships developed during the war. A committee was therefore formed, which was representative of those governmental services—including the Provost Marshal General's Office—which were directly associated with the selection and administration of the armed forces of the United States. This committee formulated a constitution and by-laws which were adopted by the newly formed society at its first annual meeting, held at Atlantic City in June, 1919, in connection with the meeting of the American Medical Association. The society was tentatively named the Medical Veterans of the World War.

The qualifications set forth in the constitution provide that, in addition to men of the military, naval and public health services, the following are eligible to membership, namely, all medical members and medical examiners of Local, Medical Advisory and District Boards, officially appointed by the President of the United States, the Provost Marshal General, or the governors of the various states; also, additional examining physicians who were appointed by the President of a Local or Medical Advisory Board and vouched for by the medical aide to the governor.

When the armistice became effective, there were about 25,000 physicians who were associated with the operations of the Selective Service, in one or other of the capacities just cited. The personal and official relationships formed in

1. Street, J. P.: The Composition of Certain Patent and Proprietary Medicines, Chicago, American Medical Association, price \$1.25 postpaid.

2. Miscellaneous Nostrums: Chicago, Am. Med. Assn., price 20 cents.

3. Epilepsy Cures: Chicago, Am. Med. Assn., price 10 cents.

4. Adams, S. H.: Great American Fraud, Chicago, Am. Med. Assn., price 25 cents.

their activities were of so binding a character that medical men thus engaged were conscious of a strong bond of fellowship. It would be a great pity if the fine sentiments and comradeships engendered by the work should cease to be, through lack of opportunity for their continued expression. The society of Medical Veterans of the World War fills the need ideally, and it is felt that all medical men who were associated in the great and eminently successful work of the Selective Service should identify themselves with this organization.

The next annual meeting of the society will be held at New Orleans, April 27, the first day of the meeting of the American Medical Association. The dues are negligible—only one dollar with the application. The secretary-treasurer is Col. F. F. Russell, M. C., U. S. Army, Army Medical School, Washington, D. C. The president is Dr. Victor C. Vaughan, Ann Arbor, Mich.; the vice president is Admiral Stitt, and the trustees are Col. F. A. Winter and Drs. James C. Perry, John M. Dodson, George E. Brewer, Hubert Work and Joel E. Goldthwait.

F. R. KEEFER, M.D., Carlisle, Pa.

Colonel, M. C., U. S. Army; Late Chief, Medical Division, Provost Marshal General's Office.

[COMMENT.—According to the report of Col. F. F. Russell, secretary, on December 1 there were 2,399 members of the Medical Veterans of the World War, distributed as follows:

1. Medical Corps, U. S. Army	1,019
2. Medical Corps, U. S. Navy	41
3. Medical Corps, U. S. P. H. S.	57
4. Contract Surgeons, U. S. Army	81
5. Acting Asst. Surgeons, U. S. P. H. S.	43
6. Local Boards	491
7. Medical Examiner, Local Board	162
8. Medical Advisory Board	505
Total	2,399

The insignia which the badge committee has reported on is now being manufactured, and will be ready for distribution to the members within a short time.—Ed.]

#### "Medical Veterans of the World War" Offers Opportunity for Constructive Work

*To the Editor:*—Would that the letter of the Surgeon-General of the Army (THE JOURNAL, Jan. 10, 1920) might be placed in the hands of every medical officer who served in the Medical Reserve Corps.

The Surgeon-General has struck at the very crux of the matter: Instead of criticism and fault finding, what is needed is united support to prevent a recurrence of much of the inefficiency of which many of us were witnesses. You cannot make an army medical officer out of a civilian practitioner over night. If we suffered from unpreparedness, we have no one to blame but ourselves. It is our duty to see that it does not recur. This can be accomplished only through education, not through carping criticism. We all have our story to tell of those under us—and by those over us. I, who served as a divisional instructor, might add much which would not appear complimentary, but such observations would profit little unless constructive in character.

The skilful operator who may have filled an important chair in a teaching institution or a medical internist of equal reputation may utterly fail in rendering efficient service in the field. Other qualifications in addition are necessary to produce an efficient army officer. The failure on the part of many to realize this phase of the situation was the cause of much heart burning. The time has come to cease complaining and to join hands in upholding the efforts which that small body of medical officers of the regular Army tried to exert in attempting to overcome a condition well nigh unsurmountable (450 medical officers for an army of 2,000,000 men). Those of us conversant with the conditions which then existed realize that in no better way can we aid in preventing a recurrence than in supporting wholeheartedly the efforts of those who wish to make the organization of the Medical Veterans of the World War a powerful force in preparing for any future emergency.

JOSEPH LEIDY, M.D., Philadelphia.

#### "ALLEGED PLACENTAL FUNCTIONS"

*To the Editor:*—The communication from Dr. Robert T. Frank (THE JOURNAL, Jan. 3, 1920, p. 47) contains some misconceptions of my interpretations of the results of the work that has been done in the studies directed toward ascertaining whether or not the placenta can be classified among the glands of internal secretion, as published in *Endocrinology* (3: 307 [July-Sept.] 1919). This article was merely intended as a review of the work to date in as brief a manner as possible. It was therein distinctly stated that "a retrospective analysis of the work undertaken, however, reveals four fairly distinct nuclei of attention," and a discussion was made of these four fields of effort, namely: (1) the possibility that the placenta produces an internal secretion concerned in eclampsia; (2) the possibility that the placenta produces an internal secretion effecting the mammary hyperplasia of pregnancy; (3) the possible galactogogic activity of the placenta, and (4) placental products considered as stimuli to growth. Each one of these phases of possible function was taken up seriatim and individually, and the statement that I have fallen into the error of not differentiating between hyperplasia or galactogogic stimuli or processes indicates a misreading of what I said, as any one can verify by reading the original article. Moreover, a wrong impression is given, as frequently happens when partial quotations are made. That I definitely assigned a finality to the bedside observations is implied by the quotation given by Dr. Frank. If he had quoted the following sentence, this implication would not have seen print. The next sentence is as follows:

It is of course obvious that we are here dealing with a condition much different from that occurring during pregnancy and that the negative results may mean little or nothing as evidence toward the part played by the placenta in *pregnancy hyperplasia*; nevertheless, the validity of the interpretation is on a par, *until disproved*, with that given from the work on virgin animals.

As to the effect of the ingestion of desiccated placenta on the growth of breast-fed infants, the observations of Van Hoosen, Cornell, and McNeile and myself have yet to be disqualified by experimental work.

Now as to my reading into the results that the placenta *does of a fact* produce an intra-uterine growth-promoting hormone: Such was neither my intention nor my aim. The statement that "it is not illogical to suppose that the placenta in utero produces a substance acting as a stimulus to fetal growth" should to any thoughtful reader convey what it was intended for, the idea, purely speculative, that such a possibility might exist, and pointing out a possible field of investigation. Its intention should be particularly obvious, since I did not make any references to any work that had been carried on tending to throw light on the possibility.

FREDERICK S. HAMMETT, PH.D., Philadelphia.

### Queries and Minor Notes

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS and queries on postal cards will not be noticed. Every letter must contain the writer's name and address, but these will be omitted, on request.

#### GLUE FOR TRACTION IN FRACTURES

*To the Editor:*—Please inform me concerning Sinclair's formula for a glue for traction in fractures.

W. E. WHALEN, M.D., Ogden, Utah.

ANSWER.—According to Sinclair's formula, 4 ounces of glue are placed in 4 pounds of cold water and left in a cool place for twelve hours. If the glue dissolves, it is bad; if it is coherent and gelatinous, weighing 8 ounces, it is good; if coherent and gelatinous, weighing 16 ounces, it is very good; if coherent and gelatinous, weighing 20 ounces, it is excellent. Fifty parts of good glue are soaked for twelve hours in water, 50 parts; glycerin, 4 or 6 parts, and menthol, 1 part, and then melted on a water bath. After neutralizing to litmus with sodium hydroxid, as commercial glue at times contains free hydrochloric acid, there are added 4 parts in summer and 5 parts in winter of glycerin and 1 part of