

and Montpellier. This text existed as an authority on medicine for nearly five centuries, and the work of the alchemists rendered no little aid toward its great success. Geber (776-A.D.) was the greatest Arabian alchemist, ranking as an alchemist among the Arabians equal with Hippocrates as a physician among the Greeks.

Coming on later a great improvement was made in pharmaceutical chemistry during the middle ages by Paracelsus (1493-1541), who was an accomplished alchemist as well as a noted physician and a man of wide travel. Many of the horrible decoctions were modified and improved by him, resulting in the preparations of tinctures. The tincture of opium, called "laudanum," by Paracelsus, has passed down to us.

The celebrated Flemish physician, Von Helmont (1578-1644) was also a distinguished chemist. Boerhaave (1668-1738) the great Dutch physician, was also a chemist and a botanist.

The above named men stand out pre-eminently in the history of medicine above the common mass of medical men. They were physicians and chemists, originators and producers, epoch makers.

Chemistry became so intimately interwoven in this way with medicine that the two are absolutely inseparable. How else could it be when *Materia Medica*, ancient, mediaeval and modern is no more than the chemical products drawn from the earth and from the vegetable and animal kingdoms?

The writer is unable to see why a physician should not know something about chemistry in view of the above facts. Ideas of modern physiology have not been discussed, nor has the ability to interpret general medical literature. It seems that there is but one conclusion and that is, if the student of medicine is to obtain an intelligent, thorough understanding of the subject he must know something of the fundamental principles of chemistry.

J. M. K.

DONATION OF MEDICAL BOOKS.

At the last staff meeting of the *Journal*, the question was brought forward and discussed as to what would be the most practical disposition of the books received by the *Journal* and reviewed by members of the staff, and of the scientific periodicals coming regularly to the offices of the *Journal*, most of them on exchange. After thoroughly covering the possibilities, it was unanimously decided that this literature would serve only a selfish end if kept as *Journal* property, and serve this end in an unsatisfactory manner, in as much as busy offices are not to be thought of as the proper place for a library or for literary work. It was thought that a much broader field of usefulness could be had for this literature, which is the best to be had and is constantly renewed through the courtesy of various publishers and authors, if the profession of the city and county and any visiting physicians could at their leisure and their pleasure make use of this continually renewed information. There was only one feasible plan. On the death of Dr. Richard Douglas his large library was left to two of our conferees, Dr. Perry Bromberg and Dr. W. H. Witt. With almost unparalleled generosity these gentlemen donated this library to the Nashville Academy of Medicine and Davidson County Medical Society, on condition that the library be properly housed.

Then a committee was appointed by the President of the local association to make the necessary arrangements. After a conference with the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Library of Nashville, space was allowed for the medical library, and the books of Dr. Douglas became the property of the physicians of Nashville and Davidson County. These, added to the considerable number already in their possession, constitute something near 4,000 volumes. They are being indexed according to the Dewey Decimal Classification System, and will shortly be open to the pro-

fession, in fact, just as soon as the numbering and indexing can be finished.

Than to give additional value to this library and to keep it continually up-to-date by donating its literature nothing could serve the wishes of the staff better.

The staff felt assured that no other disposition would be so pleasing to publishers of journals and books and to authors as this, and

that they would feel more highly gratified at this than to have these volumes hidden in the dust and darkness of office shelves or passed on to the second-hand dealers.

On putting the question no voice dissented, and this literature is the profession's, in whose interest the *Journal* was established, by whom it is maintained.

W. A. B.