zero and the respiration growing progressively slower and weaker. In fact, instead of showing any stimulating effect on the heart, it showed the opposite—both the circulation and respiration were progressively weakened. In this regard it differs from strychnin, and has no resemblance to the action of digitalis, strophanthus or any other of the known heart stimulants. Just what is in this preparation that causes a depression of the circulation I do not know. Figure 12 shows the effect exerted by 40 cactina pellets, twenty minutes after the last dose, or forty minutes after the first (20 pellets at a dose). This animal was used for another experiment and was living two hours after the administration of the cactina.

Here again it might be said in regard to cactina, as has been said of cactin, physiologic experiment is wholly out of harmony with the clinical results published by the Sultan Drug Company. In the light of my experiments all that can be said for either one or the other of these preparations (cactin [Abbott] cactina [Sultan Drug Co.]) is: Physiologically neither one corresponds in the slightest degree to the claims made by their respective exploiters, the former being absolutely inert in doses at least a thousand times greater than recommended, the latter in large doses (two or three hundred times the dose recommended) shows a depression of the circulation and respiration.

The negative results recorded in this paper simply confirmed all previous pharmacologic work on *Cactus grandiflorus*; that is, no one has ever found it to possess any physiologic action whatsoever.

A BREACH OF TRUST; THE PHYSICIAN'S USE OF SECRET REMEDIES.*

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The trust and confidence in physicians shown by the public is phenomenal. A woman will bring her baby to a doctor, whom she may never have seen before, and permit him to prescribe for it, knowing that on his judgment, knowledge and care depends its very life. Men and women of the highest culture and intellectual power will place their lives, aye, their honor, dearer than life, in the custody of an anesthetist and an operator of whom they know little. Can a higher compliment be paid to a profession than this? It must be remembered that it is the knowledge that we are physicians which gives rise to this unusual faith in our integrity, our wisdom, our skill. None but the thoughtless doctor can fail to be thrilled when he realizes to what a pinnacle of virtue the repute of his calling has raised him. Perhaps it is the familiarity of this attitude of the public which makes us a little dull in appreciating the responsibility which its docile trust imposes. It at least must drive an honest man to a soul-stirring endeavor to play fair with his patients.

While it is true that some essayists and novelists have occasionally written disparagingly of medical men, it has, as a rule, been their foibles that have been smiled or railed at rather than their altruism for their patients. The words of thoughtful observers will seldom fail to confirm what I have said as to the prevalent opinion concerning physicians. It, therefore, behooves the present generation of doctors to maintain the honor of medicine by justifying this trust in its votaries.

Recent events in commercial and political life have exposed astonishing breaches of trust in high stations. Lapses from the kind of integrity supposed to be general have shaken faith in insurance circles, in the transportation business and in financial enterprises. The result has been economic distress and almost universal distrust.

The primal duty of one who offers himself as a healer of the sick and injured is to know what he is doing. He needs to use his mind to discover the cause of the illness and to apply his knowledge to furnishing the means of relief. Hence, he must see to it that neither ignorance of medical progress, nor a mind befuddled with drugs, nor the secret composition of his remedies makes him unfit to be trusted with human life. Such deficiencies on his part rob his clients of what they have a right to expect and lessen the honor in which the profession of medicine has long been held. A man who puts an unknown dose of an unknown poison into the circulation of his trusting patient is worse than a quack. He commits a breach of trust, as surely as the financier who fills his own pockets by selling worthless securities, or the guardian who cheats his ward out of his patrimony.

For a number of years the public respect for the medical profession has been in danger; because some credence has been given to rumors of secret division of fees, acceptance of bribes and other breaches of trust such as that under discussion. My observation has proved that such practices are indulged in by those from whom the public has a right to expect better things.

Sensational newspapers have disseminated the notion that physicians are willing to kill the sick deliberately, for whom they have no cure. A recent novel by a woman of great ability seems to indicate that she believes that a trained nurse, who is sane, will murder a desperately ill patient entrusted to her care. The insult to physicians and trained nurses conveyed in these publications is a result of some of our own misdoings. The damage done to public confidence in these essentials of modern civilization by such opinions is, perhaps, as widespread as the loss of financial stability due to recent knavery in business.

The cure for the nostrum evil is the inculcation by medical teachers of the maxims of Hippocrates and their own discontinuance of prescribing secret preparations, the use of the Pharmacopeia as a text-book in medical schools, the immediate emptying of samples of secret nostrums into the sewers, a better education in therapeutics, and an insistence that the prescriber of secret nostrums is a dangerous quack, who commits an actual breach of trust.

Paraplegia Following Roentgen Treatment of Cancer.—Martini's two patients had each a cancer in the chest wall and it retrogressed notably under the influence of Roentgen treatment. As the tumor subsided signs of paraplegia became apparent and the patients succumbed from thirty to forty-four days after the onset of the paraplegia. It came on suddenly, preceded by a severe radiodermatitis, and the circumstances seem to exclude a possible direct action of the rays on the spinal cord. Nothing was found at autopsy to indicate a metastatic affection of the spinal cord nor lesions of the vessels suggesting syphilitic infection, but merely a softening, a degeneration, of the nerve substance. Consequently he is inclined to ascribe the paraplegia to a myelitis of toxic origin. His article was published in the two last numbers of the surgical section of the *Policlinico* for 1907.

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