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EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

ANOTHER CLEAN DAILY PAPER

The great reforms in Europe brought about as a result of conflict with arms are not without parallel here at home. Prohibition and equal suffrage have made wonderful strides, the one gaining a complete victory and the other at least making such headway as to reveal without a shadow of a doubt the fact that it, too, will triumph before long, as is befitting so democratic a movement.

Another contest well worthy of mention is the fight against patent medicines and charlatans in the South. Dr. Oscar Dowling, President of the Louisiana State Board of Health and State Health Officer, paved the way, but few persons elsewhere have had the courage to wage so aggressive a campaign as he. However, some six years ago *The Progressive Farmer*, published in Birmingham, a lay periodical whose circulation is greater than any other farm weekly in the country, with the one exception of *The Country Gentleman*, under the inspiration of its Advertising Manager, Mr. Joseph Martin, took an unprecedented stand among such publications and adopted a policy of main-

taining absolutely clean advertising. That courageous policy was not without significance because only lately Mr. Martin has been called to the Vice-Presidency and Managership of Advertising of *The Birmingham Ledger*, a daily afternoon paper of wide circulation in Alabama and adjoining states.

It is needless to say that before accepting the proffered position, Mr. Martin stipulated explicitly that all questionable advertising positively must be rejected, and rejected it was as soon as possible after he entered office. A recent issue of *The Ledger* announced its future course, which means for the coming year the sacrificing of some \$30,000 worth of the most profitable advertising that a paper can take. As *The Ledger* puts it:

"The old argument that a newspaper is a 'common carrier' will avail nothing with *The Ledger*. The express companies, the parcel post and the United States mail are common carriers, but they do not carry garbage, dead cats and other filth."

Along with this statement came the details of their plan of procedure in determining the class of "copy" to be rejected and that to be accepted. They solved it by appointing a committee of four to act as a Board of Censors. It consists of the President and the President-elect of the Jefferson County Medical Society, a prominent surgeon, and the Acting Editor of *THE SOUTHERN MEDICAL JOURNAL*. The decision of this Board is final in all matters along that line and its services are also to be used in replying to manufacturers, giving reasons why their products are not to be exploited in *The Ledger*.

Hundreds of the best citizens of the City and State are showering the paper with congratulations and with subscriptions. Also, certain advertisers who hitherto had selected other mediums are signing contracts for space with a publication which puts principle above dollars. It would therefore seem that although inspired by no ulterior motive, *The Ledger*

will in the end really gain in the amount of advertising carried, and we sincerely trust it will.

Those two strong New Orleans dailies—*The Item* and *The Times-Picayune*—already follow the same plan, except that their "copy" is censored by the Louisiana State Board of Health.

THE JOURNAL believes that if the physicians in every community were to take a decided stand in the matter, there would be fewer cure-alls advertised for the ignorant and hopelessly incurable, and fewer faces of the degenerates of our profession displayed in the advertising sections of our Southern papers. Let's gain an inspiration from what brave Martin of *The Ledger* has done, and start a wave of reform that will render the pages of all our papers so clean that even our little children can read every word of them without encountering filthy ads. of abortion producers, gleet cures, "lost manhood" restorers, pile salves, and the like. It is only a question of time when they will all have to go. Why not let's accomplish it now? It largely rests with you, Doctor. The chances are greatly in favor of your being one of the most influential citizens in your community, and that the better class in your vicinity would rally at your suggestion and bring about this badly needed change.

For those especially interested the exact outline of *The Ledger's* policy, we append the rules established by that paper. Unacceptable advertisements are:

1. Books, pictures, "rubber goods," or other devices or services, where the name of the device or the wording of the copy conveys, either directly or inferentially, that the article or service is of obscene, illegitimate, or questionable nature.

2. Medicines or methods for the cure or relief of diseases peculiar to women. This rule bars any copy containing such words or expressions as "women's diseases," "women's complaints," "ladies' friend," "tansy," "pennyroyal," "regulator," "preventive," and the like, and in general, any verbiage that may be considered by *The Ledger* to be similarly offensive.

3. Medicines, methods or devices for the cure or relief of diseases peculiar to men. This rule bars any copy whatever containing any such words or suggesting any such ideas as "lost manhood," "sexual weakness," "exhaustion," "impotence," "nocturnal emissions," "unnatural discharges," "gonorrhea," "impure blood," "syphilis," "gleet," "varicocele," and the like, or any copy that suggests them.

4. Medicines or mechanical devices that purport to "enlarge the bust," to "improve the figure," to make the fat thinner or the thin fatter, to restore hair to bald heads, change ugly complexions into beautiful ones, and, in general, to perform any other feats that are impossible and may be dangerous; advertising claiming to make coarse, unruly, "kinky" hair long, silky and glossy; advertisements of preparations to remove superfluous hair, worthless powder and concoctions that are supposed to make dark, swarthy skins white, such as "skin whitener," etc., which are usually directed to Negroes.

It is not intended to bar toilet preparations of harmless composition or legitimate massage devices that are truthfully advertised.

5. Any medicine that claims to cure or relieve diseases commonly held by medical science to be incurable in this way, such as tuberculosis, cancer and the like.

This rule bars reference to such diseases by expressions designed to suggest them, such, for instance, as "lung trouble," for consumption.

This rule also bars indirect claims of cure or relief of such conditions, through testimonials or otherwise.

6. Any medicine that claims to cure or relieve any disease or injury whatever. This refers to diseases, not to conditions, such as constipation and the like, and does not bar harmless cathartics and other such remedies, when truthfully advertised and passed by our medical board.

7. Any medical treatment offered "free."

8. Any advertisement not falling itself within the prohibition of these rules, but leading to correspondence between advertiser and reader, in which the principle of these rules is violated.

9. Any medicine containing a habit-forming drug of the dangerous class—opium or its alkaloids, cocaine, heroin, chloral and the like.

This rule bars preparations in which alcohol is present in quantities larger than pharmaceutical compounding requires, and thus becomes one of the active agents, or the sole active agent, in the mixture. This clause, however, will not apply to "bitters" commonly known for their alcoholic content.

10. Medicine containing useful drugs or chemicals harmless in many cases, but potentially dangerous when indiscriminately administered, acetanilid, and the like. Debatable cases of this sort will be settled at the discretion of *The Ledger*.

11. Any sort of text or illustration offensive to good taste, either in character or in appearance. This applies to all the class of grotesque, bizarre, or horrible pictures and expressions calculated to shock the reader into attention.

12. Copy that simulates in type, arrangement or otherwise, *The Ledger's* own reading matter.

13. Financial or commercial schemes or enterprises that *The Ledger* has reason to believe are fraudulent or unsound or exaggerated.

14. Liniments, etc., which claim to cure rheumatism.

15. Fake patent stock foods, poultry powders, secret formulas claiming to produce eggs, etc., etc. (If patent medicines are fakes for people, so, too, are they fakes for poor, dumb beasts, whose cases are harder to diagnose than those of human beings.)

16. Mail order advertising which "knocks" local or general retail merchants, such, for instance, as mail order automobile tire concerns, who claim to sell first-class standard make tires at reduced rates.

17. Any advertising which claims to give something "free" which is not actually free.

18. *The Ledger* reserves the right at any and all times to refuse any copy submitted to it, if, in its opinion, it is not entirely worthy, and to edit any copy submitted to it, regardless of who the advertiser is.

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THE SALICYLATE

Any drug that acts as a "pain-killer" readily finds its way into the hands of the layman through many channels, official and unofficial. It matters little whether or not the formula is visible, for what layman knows enough materia medica to appreciate the truth or falsity of the claims or is sufficiently versed in therapeutics as to exercise fine discrimination in the selection of drugs? Furthermore, seeing with what carelessness and willingness the physician (either too busy or too indifferent to make a thorough examination) prescribes medicines under a patented name for almost every ill known to mankind, the layman imbibes a strange degree of education and confidence and ultimately becomes a self-constituted diagnostician and healer. In this connection it must be admitted that the druggists—

a band of quasi medical men—do their bit to foster the pernicious habit of treating symptoms without a careful analysis of the causative factors.

A certain well advertised brand of acetylsalicylic acid has become popularized by the physician, druggist and layman, and it is safe to assert that to estimate the annual consumption of this product in the United States alone, one would have to deal in tons of weight rather than in pounds. In tabulating the indications for its use from the layman's viewpoint, there would be but one comprehensive manner in which to present the question and that would be in submitting the index of a text-book on medicine, surgery, neurology, obstetrics, urology and what not as a complete list of diseases for which it is a specific. The dosage varies in the individual case, but that the drug is dispensed irrespective of knowledge of its physiological action, is the evidence gathered by every physician during some period of his medical career. This phase of the mania depends entirely upon the emergency,—whether it be to *cure* trouble or to *prevent* it. In the former instance, heroic doses are employed.

It is to be regretted that the drug does not cause outwardly alarming symptoms when taken in relatively large doses. The writer recalls that an eminent jurist once remarked that this particular salicylate could not hurt any one, as it was a vegetable product; and in compliment to his theory it must be added that his use of it was in the extreme. On the other hand, we have the attitude of the layman in regard to another universally used drug,—calomel. In this instance the hand of the layman works more cautiously and slowly, for it has been impressed upon him that a heavy dose will cause salivation, and it is this picture of a direful calamity that

deters him in the injudicious use of this mercurial salt. But not so with the well-known salicylate. Sixty and eighty grains per diem usually produce no visible ill effect, and consequently the flesh of the world must submit to the incongruities and inconsistencies of secular remedies until the spread of a much-needed reformation has been achieved.

There is but one means by which this mania can be cured. It is the physician. Let each one discourage the promiscuous use of this advertised remedy by describing to the habitues its chemical composition, its unfavorable physiological action, its contraindications, and then, to sustain the adverse position, refuse to allow the continuance of this drug; but if necessary at the same time leave a prescription for some salicylate or another coal tar derivative. According such treatment to this and every other drug that bears the stamp of chicanery, the backbone to self-diagnosis and treatment will be broken and the role of the physician will be easier and more replete with success.

A PEDIATRICS CONSIDERATION

In the modern application of the principles of scientific medicine the physician often tends to disregard the more practical and common-sense points of therapy. This is true in every branch of medicine, but especially so in the practice of pediatrics, because in this field the medical attendant finds his services very markedly augmented by the ever-ready advice of self-constituted authorities who are ever willing to disclaim any responsibility should such advice later lead to untoward consequences.

It is all well and good to employ the last word in the treatment of acidosis,

colitis, hemorrhagica neonatorum, intussusception, poliomyelitis, the acute exanthemata of childhood, etc., and it is to be hoped that the clinical and laboratory students of pediatrics will continue to advance methods for lessening the frightful mortality of these and numerous other childhood maladies. However, these conditions are of infrequent occurrence when compared with the more usual errors noted in the care of babies and children by inexperienced, neglectful or ignorant parents. It is an easy matter for the baby to be given the proverbial "pacifier," to be administered opium preparations such as paregoric and infant anodynes, to be fed on "soothing syrup," and to dedicate its very life to the wiles of patent medicines and "home-made" remedies. These are but suggestions of the countless methods of furnishing a heavy handicap to the child that is desperately struggling for a proper and safe grip upon life.

The doctor who includes the care of children and infants in his work must educate the parents, and if this fails, turn policeman in behalf of the child. Let him dwell at length upon the mouth and teeth defects brought about by the use of the pacifier; let him emphatically denounce the habit of keeping the baby quiet with "soothing syrups" so that the ill-prepared mother may oftentimes be undisturbed in the pursuit of selfish, empty pleasure; let him rebel against the use of stimulants such as alcohol, strychnine, etc.; let him enunciate the principles of child-life and child-health conservation and in turn become a zealous guardian of these covenants. The time has arrived for the complete suppression of would-be "lay healers" of children, and of their many absurdities, the continuance of which largely depends upon the romance and superstition of pseudo-medical folk lore.