

EDITORIAL

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THE FORGOTTEN ART OF DISPENSING

With the rise of chemotherapy the art of dispensing is gradually coming to a grinding halt. There is no doubt that modern drugs introduced in the practice of medicine during the last three or four decades have greatly added to the relief of suffering particularly from infectious states and others where the pathogenesis has been understood well enough for reversal of such changes, or stopping them. In the wake of all these advances one important thing has been lost sight of; that is the individualization of treatment by the blind use of proprietories.

In the field of Dermatology, for instance, local therapy is important, when the involvement of the skin is extensive. The external remedies needed for application in such patients must be available at costs within the capacity of the patient. The costs of most proprietary lotions, creams and ointments is so high, that they are not within the reach of our people. The value of many of these preparations is grossly disproportionate to their costs. In many cases a simple pharmacopoeal preparation that could be dispensed by any hospital pharmacy could do better. It is possible to practice good dermatology with not more than ten preparations that could be dispensed in a hospital pharmacy.

Nowadays even in big cities, let alone in smaller places, very few chemists compound and dispense doctor's prescriptions. This is unfortunate when every drug store should legally employ a qualified pharmacist, his services are allowed to go to waste. If doctors insist, this trend could be corrected to the great advantage of the poor patient.

It is very important that there should be a revival of the art of individual prescribing and dispensing in Dermatology. The graduate student in Dermatology in our Medical colleges should be made to familiarize himself in the compounding and dispensing of the time honoured local preparations and observe the nature of each preparation. Thereby he can fruitfully observe undesirable effects, of therapy, should they occur. He also has the freedom to change the composition, and strength of ingredients to suit the condition of the skin from time to time. This experience is invaluable. Teachers have to set an example by adopting the practice of individual prescriptions and avoiding the use of proprietories, as far as possible.

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