

brought into practice. The whole attention must be devoted to the operation in hand, and not relaxed until it is completed.

Once allow it to be drawn away by conversation or otherwise, and it is easy to make an error, which may not be discovered until too late.

The utmost care should be paid to the smallest details, such as draining the last drop of liquid from the measure, or that every particle of a pill mass is scraped from the pestle and mortar, or being careful to note that each measure or implement is perfectly clean before using.

Then the strictest accuracy is necessary in weighing and measuring, where a drop or a grain too much may be of the utmost importance. The same caution must also be observed in checking the quantities used and the dose ordered in a prescription, also in writing the directions on the label.

Neatness is a point one expects to find innate in every Nurse, so we need not perhaps urge the necessity of it being observed in every operation of dispensing. It is essential in the wrapping of a powder, the finish of a pill, in the writing of a label, which must combine distinctness as well, and in many other little details the dispenser is called upon to perform.

The student should firmly resolve to use every precaution to render a mistake practically impossible. One such error is sufficient to destroy confidence, and an unreliable dispenser can never be trusted.

The practice of the principles we have mentioned should be made habitual from the commencement, as once a slovenly method of working is acquired, it is rarely got rid of, and is fatal to the student who would become a smart and reliable dispenser of medicines.

In the following pages we can barely give more than a mere outline of the many processes employed in dispensing, but have particularised those we think likely to be of the greatest assistance to the beginner.

*Guide for Study.*—As a general guide for study the student may find the following hints useful. To begin with, an intimate knowledge of the British Pharmacopœia is most essential. This work, to which we shall refer more fully later, is issued by the Medical Council, under the authority of the Medical Acts, and is the official

and Standard list of chemicals, drugs, and preparations used in medicine. The Pharmacopœia has been called "The Dispensing-Bible," and the competent dispenser is expected to have its preparations, processes, and doses at his finger ends. The student should first learn the Latin names of the various drugs, &c., and then the dose of each. A good method to impress these on the memory is to write down the Latin, followed by the English name of the drug, &c., then the preparations, if any, it enters into, and the dose of each. A useful work for study will be found in Pareira's "Selections from Physicians' Prescriptions," from which the useful terms employed in prescriptions may be learnt, a large number of examples being also given.

To gain an insight into pharmaceutical and practical chemistry, Attfield's work on the subject will be found most suitable. The practical processes for manufacturing all the chemicals included in the pharmacopœia, together with the general laws of chemistry in connection with pharmacy, will be found in this treatise.

Materia Medica must also receive attention, especially that of the organic or vegetable kingdom, and a knowledge of the active principles of drugs, and the best method of judging of their quality acquired. For this subject Garrod's or Parrish's Materia Medica is recommended.

When a careful study of the subjects mentioned has been made, the Nurse should place herself under the instruction of a qualified chemist, to be instructed in the many technicalities connected with the art of dispensing, which can only be learnt by practical illustration and experience.

*The Prescription.*—In order to dispense, it is first necessary to know how to read a prescription. In most civilized countries, the Latin language is used in writing medical prescriptions, for which purpose it has many advantages.

In the first place, it is a universal language among medical practitioners and chemists, and a prescription written in Latin can be dispensed in almost any country. Secondly, it is considered by prescribers not always advisable for the patient to be aware of the exact nature of the medicine he is taking. Therefore to know how to read a prescription, a certain knowledge of Latin is absolutely necessary. The names applied to the various chemicals, drugs, and their preparations, may be learnt mostly from the pharmacopœia and committed to memory. These terms are largely abbreviated when used in prescription.

(To be continued.)

---

WORTH TRYING.—Dodd's Borax and Camphor Soap.—Mrs. Henry King Parks, F.R.S.A., says: "For washing the hair it eclipses all others, rendering it smooth, lustrous and elastic, and is one of the best for toilet purposes; prevents and cures many skin affections." Sold everywhere, in tablets, 6d. each, or post free eight stamps; from Sole Proprietors, Dodd Brothers, Stamford Hill N.

---

FUNERALS.—Earth to Earth Burials, Cremations, and Statuary. For high-class WORK, the LONDON NECROPOLIS COMPANY, 188, Westminster-bridge-road, and 2, Lancaster-place, Strand.—Telegrams "Tenebratio, London."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)