

THE BUSINESS ADDRESS*

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It has been customary, during the past few years, to present in the June number of the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HOMEOPATHY the President's business address with the object in view that our members, scattered far and wide, may read and digest the facts set forth therein. The actual work of the sessions of the Institute is expedited and made more efficient when the attending members are well posted upon the subjects to be brought before them. In my opinion, everything should be done to make these matters appear simple and straightforward so as to elucidate rather than to deceive, as is so often the object of language.

Every year important matters arise which demand, at least partial settlement during our annual gathering. The past year has been peculiarly pregnant with great deeds and consequent responsibilities. Homeopathy, in common with all other endeavors, has risen to the emergency and, as often happens in crises, has succeeded remarkably well in carrying on the work assigned to it. There are, however, matters of paramount importance to all homeopathic practitioners which affect not only their personal affairs and the program of the Institute and its component societies, but also indirectly national welfare.

The War's Aftermath

It is quite natural, following the end of a great strife, that there should be abroad, both among the conquerors and the conquered, an undefined spirit of physical unrest and mental disquietude. During the stress of real fighting much is forgotten in the effort to accomplish the end, but once it is over every real or fancied ill or grievance or long pent-up desire asserts itself privately or publicly. Hence there ensues months of reaction or readjustment incident to the upheaval of a peaceful and hitherto productive life. At this time, when the war is not far removed, it is difficult to say what will be the exact effects upon our profession. Certain facts, however, are bold enough to emphasize. The medical craft here and abroad has suffered numerical losses both in deaths and disabling casualties. These are the more marked because trained practitioners are becoming scarcer, even in our, medically speaking, well-stocked land.

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A goodly number of men in the service intend to remain in government employ. Quite a proportion do not expect to again enter private practice or at least not in the same locality. I recently asked a group of sixteen medical officers of varying ages, who were about to terminate their military careers, what were their intentions as to the future. Only four expected to resume practice in the old home, three hoped to "open up" (as they expressed it) in larger communities, three intended to have a vacation of a year at least before resuming work, and six, mostly over forty-five years of age, avowed they would never again practice actively. These figures may not be typical of the whole, but they give food for thought and demonstrate an element of the general unrest and disorder incident to war. One might judge the determination of a physician to change his occupation or location to dissatisfaction or a desire to better himself but, regardless of real judgment of the individual case, the whole works for the disorganization of our societies and institutions. Without being the least pessimistic as to the future I think it is well for our organizations to anticipate difficulties of a social, political and financial nature. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, at least to the extent we Americans ever accept the teachings of our own or others' national tragedies.

Assets and Liabilities

Practically all of our endeavors and accomplishments as well as our disappointments and failures may be compared to a ledger account. It is our privilege and pride to point to the assets and equally it must be our plain duty to discuss our failures and losses, and attempt by collective endeavor to decrease our liabilities and turn them into remunerative capital.

Assets

The Institute. Our parent and national organization has been splendidly successful during the past year, proving beyond peradventure the wisdom of the model adopted three years ago. As you have already learned, we have more real members, more real money—due to the generous contributions to the War Activities Fund—and more real subscribers to the JOURNAL than ever before. Our Headquarters has become increasingly efficient; our JOURNAL more and more acceptable; our Executive Committee has functionated as never before and our relationship with the State Societies has become closer and more intimate. We owe a large debt of gratitude to those workers who have made all these happy facts possible.

Federation. Commendable progress has been made along these lines but inasmuch as the Congress of States and other sessions of the Institute will devote considerable time to the furtherance of this project and inasmuch as the steps must be logically consummated, I do not deem it wise to offer any advice. This is not a project that can be perfected in one year, neither can the Instituté afford to change its policy with every change of administration, so I would ask that all members give their earnest attention and co-operation to such steps as may be undertaken to perfect federation. In itself there is nothing more important to the welfare of organized homeopathy throughout the country than the closest affiliation between the state societies and the A. I. H. Lend your advice and encouragement to those who are your agents in the settlement of these details.

War Service. If ever proof of the value of organization were needed, only a cursory glance at the work accomplished by the Institute through official channels for your individual good and the good of us all will answer the question. Never in previous wars has the federal government given the least recognition to homeopathy. In fact there has been distinct antipathy. In this, the greatest of all strifes, organized homeopathy was a real partner of the federal government. We asked no favors beyond the desire to participate wholesouledly. The response of our branch of the profession to the Nation's call has been splendid. Some details of this I hope to give in a more formal address. However, it may not be amiss to state that very few instances of discrimination against homeopathic practitioners have come to the attention of the Executive Committee and most of these righted themselves. I know of no flagrant instance of injustice. The medical profession as a whole have many reasons to complain concerning details incident to army life and regulation but these complaints are not limited to members of our school.

We have reason to be proud of Base Hospitals No. 44 and No. 48 and the Flower Hospital Unit, not to mention the hundreds of individuals in service. We likewise will never cease to regret the non-acceptance of the base hospital offered by the Hahnemann Hospital of Philadelphia, Hahnemann Hospital of Chicago and by the homeopathic women of the Institute. It is a great temptation to dilate upon these matters but this is not the time nor place.

Home Service. Those who remained in civil life have contributed largely to the splendid results of the past year by maintaining successfully our hospitals, weakened by depleted person-

nel and diminished revenue; by aiding in the numerous volunteer patriotic endeavors of both local and national, unofficial and official character; and by keeping our state and local societies in active existence. On the whole, our state meetings have been above the average, well attended and enthusiastic. Our hospitals have weathered financial distress, a few have even added to their assets and at least two new ones have been opened. Our colleges have suffered so much that perforce they become a liability and must be considered as such. By this statement I do not wish in the least to detract from the successful efforts made by a few to acknowledge that we are facing a crisis in the matter of homeopathic medical education.

Liabilities

Personnel and Material. We have suffered a lamentable loss from the accidents of war and epidemic causes but probably no more in proportion with the rest of the profession of medicine. The same general statement may be made of partial losses incident to change of occupation and residence as detailed before. Time will remedy a certain proportion of the latter group but nothing can restore to us those whose labors are at an end. No doubt our institutions have suffered financial loss but so have all other similar endeavors. We can face the task of their upbuilding as cheerfully as any other group of Americans.

Our Medical Colleges. Perhaps we can better contrast the condition of homeopathic medical education by prefacing these remarks with the statement that organized homeopathy was never stronger than it is today and one hears very little of such hackneyed expressions as "it used to be" or "might have been," but with the admission of this fact goes the startling truth that our medical colleges are slowly and rather rapidly disappearing. We must not deceive ourselves in regard to this situation. From a total in 1901 of 20 colleges, 1,500 students and 350 graduates, and in 1916 of 9 colleges, 736 students and 161 graduates, we have descended in 1919 to 6 colleges with less than 500 students and probably less than 100 graduates. No matter what the cause or causes may be, we cannot underestimate the far-reaching results. It plainly spells catastrophe to the cause for which many of us have given a life's work.

At the present moment we are not producing by one-half enough graduates to yearly man our hospitals, not enough by one-third to supply the inevitable losses in our ranks during a normal peaceful year, not to mention that no allowance is contemplated in this summary to supply trained homeopathic physi-