

The druggist would then file it away for thirty days, but under no circumstances would he be allowed to refill, copy or in any manner communicate the ingredients of the prescription to any one, unless it be for his own protection on account of some alleged error, etc.

At the end of thirty days the prescription would be returned to the physician who wrote it.

I believe a law to this effect would be satisfactory to all concerned and accomplish a great deal in the way of getting the physician and druggist more closely together, which would be a most desirable thing; for a physician cannot hold his exalted position and give his best work to his patients if he has constantly to keep in mind commercial considerations.

Such a law, operating in all of the states, would make the relation of the physician and druggist more pleasant, would do away with counter prescribing by the druggist and would also lessen self-drugging by the laity.

[EDITORIAL COMMENT:—Dr. Siever gives arguments against the indiscriminate use of ready-made mixtures which are incontrovertible. They should convince those physicians who have been thoughtless enough to prescribe the various ready-made pills, tablets, syrups and elixirs with which this country is deluged that it is to the best interests of the physician, the patient and the public that individual prescriptions be written for individual cases. The proposed return of the physician's prescription to the writer within a specified time would be most desirable in many ways. At present the pharmacist is generally looked on as the custodian of the prescription and it will require considerable effort to convince the pharmacist and particularly the public of the correctness of this better view as to the ownership of prescriptions. A discussion of this matter would certainly be of interest.]

Correspondence

The Niemeyer Pill

To the Editor:—The well-known pill of calomel, squills and digitalis no doubt antedates the time of Niemeyer, as suggested by Dr. James Tyson in THE JOURNAL, Jan. 21, 1911, p. 211. It was usually prescribed:

R Hydrargyri chloridi mitt. 3ss
Pulveris scillæ ʒi
Pulveris digitalis 3ss

M. et fiat pilulas XXXII.
Sig. One every four or five hours.

This pill was used for ascites, dropsy and effusions. I worked out many a one over forty years ago, and my father-in-law, the late Dr. Henry Carpenter, prescribed and worked out the same formula more than thirty years before my time. There was, however, a pill prescribed by Dr. C. Murchison, of London, consisting of:

R Pulveris scillæ gr. ʒss
Pulveris digitalis fol. gr. ss
Pilule hydrargyri gr. ʒi

M. et fiat pilulam I.
Sig. One such pill three times daily in ascites.

This pill enjoyed a long and creditable reputation in the treatment of dropsy.

Felix v. Niemeyer's pill may have been suggested about 1869 (See his Text-Book on Practical Medicine, Am. Ed., 1869, Vol I, p. 244) with a view of combating the fever of phthisis. It consisted in:

R Pulveris digitalis fol. gr. ʒss
Pulveris ipecacuanhæ gr. ʒss
Pulveris opii, ʒā. gr. ʒʒ
Extracti helenii, q. s.

M. et fiat pilulam I.
Sig. One pill three times daily.

Quinin sulphate, gr. I, was added to the above prescription when the type of fever became periodical, and the exacerbations and chills much pronounced.

ROBERT M. BOLENIUS, Lancaster, Pa.

[The above was submitted to Dr. Tyson who comments:]

To the Editor:—Dr. Bolenius is correct. Of course many modifications of the doses and even constituents of the true Niemeyer's pill have been made by various prescribers to meet

special indications and it is likely that Niemeyer's pill itself was suggested to him by Heim's pill which is also given on page 244, Vol. 1, of Niemeyer's "Practice" and of which the formula is given by Dr. Bolenius in the last prescription of his letter. Niemeyer says much the same thing in his "Practice" as I quoted but I preferred to refer to his little book on "Pulmonary Consumption" because it is especially devoted to the subject.

Since my letter to THE JOURNAL Dr. Cattell has called my attention to the fact that in his "Medical Dictionary" published by Lippincott, edition of 1910, he has given the correct formula for Niemeyer's pill and I so find it.

JAMES TYSON, Philadelphia.

Pasteurized Milk at Randall's Island

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL (Jan. 7, 1911, p. 20), there appeared a very interesting paper on infant mortality by Drs. Koehler and Drake. On page 23 were the following paragraph and table:

The Mortality at the Infant Asylum at Randall's Island.—When the infants in the care of the City of New York were fed on milk from a carefully selected herd pastured on the island, the death-rate was as shown in the first part of Table 5. A pasteurizing plant was installed in the early part of 1898. No other change in diet or hygiene was made.

TABLE 5.—DEATH-RATE AT THE INFANT ASYLUM, RANDALL'S ISLAND

BEFORE THE USE OF PASTEURIZED MILK			
	Children Treated	No. of Deaths	Percentage
1895	1,216	511	42.02
1896	1,212	474	39.11
1897	1,181	524	44.36
Total	3,609	1,509	41.81
AFTER THE USE OF PASTEURIZED MILK			
1898	1,284	255	19.80
1899	1,097	269	24.52
1900	1,084	300	27.68
1901	1,028	186	18.09
1902	820	181	22.07
1903	542	101	18.63
1904	345	57	16.52
Total	6,200	1,349	21.75

The Department of Charities published no reports from 1894 to 1902. Examination of the original records shows that, while the figures are correct for the most part, the accompanying statements and deductions are erroneous. Similar assertions have been made before and refuted in public meetings at the New York Academy of Medicine and elsewhere, as well as in print.

The following extracts from the minutes of the meetings of the medical board show chronologically the development of feeding by sterilized and pasteurized milk, and the difficulties attending its introduction in a public institution:

1888—October. "Recommended that a method of sterilizing milk be adopted for the Infant's Hospital."

1890—October. "Dr. Van Santvoord reported that some weeks ago he investigated the method of sterilization of the milk practiced in the Infants' Hospital and found that it was very carelessly done by the workhouse women. He put it under direct control of the managing nurse and the result had been greatly to the benefit of the children."

1893—February. "Recommend immediate change in sterilization of milk. That it be put (again) in charge of a competent nurse," etc.

1895—February. Special report on milk-supply by W. L. Stowell. "Bottle-fed infants are given milk from cows on the island. . . . The milk is brought to the hospital immediately after milking and then pasteurized for twenty minutes at a temperature of 170 F. This is done in large steam caldrons in the kitchen."

NOTE.—This is the first year of the table mentioned as "Before the Use of Pasteurized Milk." An error.

1896—In this year *percentage feeding* was introduced. A number of stock formulas were made up daily and pasteurized for twenty minutes in feeding bottles bearing metal collars with the percentages as 3.5-6.5-1.5. This was done for a time in the steam cooking-caldrons, but later in wash-boilers heated over gas stoves.