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PHARMACY'S UNFINISHED TASKS¹

By Dr. ROBERT P. FISCHELIS

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THE preparation, standardization and dispensing of drugs and medicines constitute an activity which is indispensable to good medical care. How, where and under what conditions this professional activity can be carried on with greatest benefit to all concerned is a question that has been agitating many minds ever since the use of drugs in the treatment and prevention of disease became a part of the practice of medicine. It is not necessary to justify the existence of a separate group of practitioners to whom has been assigned the function of compounding and dispensing medicines. Pharmacists have made an important place for themselves among those engaged in providing good medical care to the people of all nations. The evidence of a changing attitude on the part of the public toward the organization of medical services, how-

ever, makes it advisable to examine, from time to time, our existing methods of furnishing pharmaceutical service and the systems by which such service is controlled.

The practice of medicine has been subjected recently to some searching inquiries on the part of professional and lay groups who are interested in providing medical care for all the people in fullest measure at a price they can pay. These inquiries have naturally included studies of pharmaceutical practice, and some interesting facts have been developed which should not be lost upon those most interested in the future welfare of the profession of pharmacy.

When we speak of pharmacists we do not necessarily limit ourselves to persons operating retail drug stores. As a matter of fact, a great deal of the practice of professional pharmacy is carried on to-day in places far removed from the corner drug store. The manufacturing function of the pharmacist, especially

¹Part of an address delivered at the Third Annual Pharmaceutical Conference of the College of Pharmacy of the University of Michigan.

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