

THERAPEUTIC THAUMATURGY

BY ARTHUR J. CRAMP

To succeed in the world it is much more necessary to possess the penetration to discover who is the ignoramus than to discover who is the wise man.—*Talleyrand*.

AT an earlier date, before government assumed the right to tell us what we should eat, what we should drink, and howsoever we should be clothed, the motto of American business was *caveat emptor*. Today the tendency is to insist that it is the seller who should beware—*caveat venditor*. The earlier motto was that of a race of individualists; it was a natural application of *laissez-faire*, a natural functioning of the Manchester school. And in general it worked very well. True, the bucolic visitor to the bright lights might be persuaded to part with perfectly good money for a fictitious title to the Woolworth Building, but the balance of trade was maintained when sophisticated and hard-boiled urbanites visited the great open spaces and were sold real estate which, if it was more material than fake titles to skyscrapers, yet had no greater value.

In the barter, sale or exchange of practically every line of merchandise save one, the purchaser has a chance of learning, eventually, whether or not he has been swindled. Even to the unexpert, time through its agencies, wear and tear, makes clear whether one has made a good or a bad bargain in the purchase of an automobile, a piano or a suit of clothes. Conversely, the man who sells cars, or musical instruments or raiment has nature as an opponent. If the goods are not up to specifications, it is but a matter of time before the purchaser learns the fact, and so acquires knowledge which, if he has brains, may

prevent him making the same error the next time. But there is one commodity in the purchase of which the public never does and never can get an even break: products or services that are sold for the alleged alleviation or cure of human ills. For here the seller has nature, not as an opponent, but as an assistant. The healing power of nature—*vis medicatrix naturæ*—is such, fortunately for biologic perpetuity, that the general tendency of the disordered animal economy is to get well. Not always, it is true; there come stages and conditions in which the tendency of the ailing body is to go on to dissolution. But in probably eighty per cent. of all human ailments the afflicted person gets well whether he does something for his indisposition or does nothing for it. Herein lies the opportunity of the quack and the nostrum vendor.

II

In that special branch of industry commonly, though incorrectly, spoken of as the patent-medicine business, the let-us-alone policy reached its highest degree of development just prior to 1907. In no other field did individualism in trade go to such lengths. Although the business is one that affects not merely the purse but also the very health and life of the nation, it was subject to less control and reeked with more fraud and chicanery than any other line. Until January 1, 1907, the manufacturers of the proprietary remedies commonly called patent-medicines were under no restraint whatever save that imposed by their own consciences—and it was rare, indeed, for them to have consciences.

True, the seller of nostrums, even in those days, was in theory subject to the Common Law and it prohibited the perpetration of fraud, but the public seemed to assume and the courts to acquiesce in the assumption that claims for therapeutic effect lay outside the realm of fact and belonged in the broad and elastic field of opinion. No one ever heard of the manufacturer of a sure cure for consumption or cancer being sued by a defrauded purchaser who had failed to be cured. Occasionally some particularly crude quacksalver was haled into court by the heirs of a victim who had been poisoned by his vicious concoction, but no one ever thought of bringing suit against a seller of the elixir of life because his preparation merely failed to live up to the claims made for it.

Then, in 1907, there went into effect what is known as the Pure Food and Drug Law—the National Food and Drugs Act. The enactment of this statute reflected the influence of that large body of citizens who had come either directly or through their near forbears from the more paternalistic governments of continental Europe. It was an effort on the part of the Federal government to protect the uninformed from their ignorance in a field in which ignorance is peculiarly helpless. When the bill which finally became the law was introduced it was fought tooth and nail by the sophisticators of foods and the exploiters of nostrums, and much was done during its consideration to tone down the restrictions originally planned by those who framed it.

As it finally went on the statute books the law said, in effect, that a patent-medicine or any other drug product would be deemed misbranded "the package or label of which shall bear *any statement which shall be false or misleading in any particular.*" To the non-legal mind such a statement seems fairly definite and clear cut; and it was so interpreted by many courts and by most of the proprietary remedy fraternity. The majority of patent-medicine sellers, as soon as the law became effective, modified

their labels and packages so as to eliminate the false and misleading claims that had previously appeared on them. They began to confine their mendacity to those avenues of publicity that were immune to the law—newspaper advertisements, billboards, circulars for the drug counters, etc.

It took a cancer-cure quack to show that what appeared to be a plain statement of fact was really something to be interpreted only in a Pickwickian sense. This man, when proceeded against by the Federal authorities for making false therapeutic claims regarding his "cure," advanced the plea that the law was not intended to cover questions of therapy. The court in which he was tried upheld his plea and, when the case was carried to the United States Supreme Court, that august body, in a divided opinion, sustained the lower court and held in effect that the statement "false or misleading in *any* particular" really meant false or misleading in *certain* particulars. The court admitted that, "logically" interpreted, the Food and Drugs Act probably prohibited the making of false statements regarding curative effects, but it held that if interpreted "idiomatically" it did not so prohibit. And the majority of the court decided in favor of an idiomatic interpretation, and, incidentally, in the interests of as vicious a gang of high-binders as ever operated under the protection of law. It is but fair to record even at this late date that Justices Hughes, Harlan and Day vigorously dissented.

Naturally, the decision was greeted with joy by the more crooked of the patent-medicine interests, but their victory was short-lived. Recognizing that the interpretation had dealt the law a body blow, President Taft, in a special message to Congress, urged the passage of an amendment that would specifically prohibit false claims for therapeutic effects. As a result, the Sherley Amendment was passed. In its original form the amendment declared in effect that a patent-medicine or other drug product would be deemed misbranded if

the package or label bore any statement regarding its curative effects which was "false or misleading." The patent-medicine interests were able to force a change in this wording and to substitute for the broad and inclusive phrase, "false or misleading," the narrower "false and fraudulent." As fraud, in the eyes of the law, implies intent, and intent is a difficult thing to prove, the change was of great tactical value to the fakers.

A comparison of patent-medicine labels of pre-Pure Food Law days with those issued after the passage of the act is an education in the art and science of mendacity. Piso's "Cure for Consumption" became a mere "Medicine for Coughs, Colds, Etc." Lydia Pinkham's well-known alcoholic pick-me-up, which had previously appealed to suffering womankind as "A Sure Cure For Falling of the Womb," first dropped the "sure cure" and eventually reached the comparatively innocuous, "Recommended for the Treatment of Non-Surgical Cases of Weakness and Disorders of the Female Generative Organs." Kilmer's Swamp Root, which used to "cure" various kidney diseases, was first made to "correct" these troubles and finally was meekly "recommended" for them. But the manufacturers of Castor Oil Pills, which "give the effect without the taste," were left in a predicament by the law. As the pills contained no castor oil, the name was so obvious a falsehood that not even an idiomatic interpretation would release it from the law's penalties. But the name of a patent-medicine is really its most important commercial asset, the composition being of minor moment. It thus became necessary for the exploiters of Castor Oil Pills, in casting about for a new name, to coin one that, while passing muster, would not make all their previous advertising a total loss. That the name had to be changed was obvious, but there was nothing to prevent the retention of the pronunciation. So it came to pass that a public that continued to call for Castor Oil Pills was handed Casca Royal Pills.

III

But the National Food and Drugs Act was not the only restraining influence on the traffic in proprietary medicines. States and even municipalities, awakened to the menace of the trade, enacted restrictive legislation. As a result, the catarrh snuffs, loaded with cocaine and creators of numberless "coke snuffers," were practically put out of existence, while the sellers of morphine-containing soothing syrups found it necessary to modify their formulæ. Later came the Harrison Anti-Narcotic Act of 1915. This, while it has pretty effectually eliminated the nostrums containing cocaine, has not put an end to those containing morphine. The proprietary medicine interests were able to get a joker in the law which permits the presence of limited quantities of opium, morphine, heroine and codeine in their preparations. This has brought about an anomalous state of affairs. A licensed and registered physician is required under the law to fill out elaborate forms, which become a public record, when he prescribes opium, morphine, heroine or codeine in any amount, however small. But while the public cannot legally get the minutest doses of the drugs proscribed by the Harrison Act in the prescription of a licensed and registered physician except through the formality of elaborately devised forms in which both the physician's and the patient's names are recorded, this same public can buy these same drugs by the gallon in patent-medicines. The only restriction made by the law relates to the amount of such habit-forming drugs that may be put by the manufacturer into each fluid ounce of his concoction.

About the only nostrum admittedly containing cocaine that the law has left on the market is an alleged asthma remedy originally put out by the late Nathan Tucker of Mt. Gilead, Ohio. The label of the Tucker remedy declares—in accordance with the requirements of the Food and Drugs Act—the presence of five grains of

cocaine to the fluid ounce. When the officials at Washington were asked how this nostrum could be sold through the mails in plain violation of the Harrison Act they made the excuse that the cocaine in the preparation became hydrolized in the process of manufacture and that, therefore, the product, when it reached the consumer, did not actually contain cocaine. But even if this were true it would be obvious that the remedy contains cocaine derivatives, and the law applies just as pertinently to the derivatives of the alkaloids specifically mentioned as it does to the alkaloids themselves. This is proved by the fact that the officials enforcing the law require physicians who wish to prescribe apomorphine—an emetic and not a habit-forming drug—to go through the usual formalities. The label on the Tucker remedy declares plainly that the preparation contains five grains of cocaine to the fluid ounce. If it doesn't contain the drug in the amount stated, then the officials who have the enforcement of the Food and Drugs Act are derelict in not declaring it misbranded. In either case, it seems fairly evident that its sale violates a Federal statute.

Considering the importance of alcohol as an ingredient of patent-medicines, one might suppose that national Prohibition would have put a serious added restraint on the nostrum trade. On the contrary, the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act have increased enormously the sale of nostrums containing alcohol. Furthermore, they have brought about the creation of many new alcoholic nostrums, all sold in such a way as to appeal to those whose pre-war stock is exhausted and whose thirst cannot be legitimately satisfied. Take the case of Lyko, which came from Kansas City, Mo. During the war a member of the Army Medical Corps at Fort Sam Houston sought information about Lyko because, as he said, he understood the soldiers were using it as a beverage; about the same time a county health officer in Tennessee wrote that Lyko, while advertised as a great medicine, was being

used, in his section, almost exclusively for drinking purposes. The product was introduced in an effective way. The public was urged to get a free sample bottle at the nearest drug-store. When Lyko was analyzed in the chemical laboratory of the American Medical Association it was found to have twice the alcoholic strength of champagne—over 22 per cent—but insufficient medication to prevent its use as a beverage. Investigation showed that it came from the same address as that of a distilling company in process of liquidation and that the original incorporators of the concern making it had been employés of the distilling company. An effective line in the Lyko advertising campaign was: "It Opens up Wonderful Visions of the Future to the Down-Cast, Weary-Laden Souls Depressed in Spirit and Body."

Then there was Tona-Vin, which also burst on an arid nation by the free-sample and newspaper-advertising routes. In Toledo alone 50,000 free bottles were given away "to prove the remarkable tonic effect of this famous medicine." Tona-Vin, which tasted like wine with a dash of wild cherry and a suspicion of bitters, had all the elements of a good "repeater." It, too, was analyzed in the chemical laboratory of the American Medical Association, which reported that, although the stuff contained 18 per cent. of alcohol, there was not sufficient medication to prevent the public using it as a toddy. True, it contained some quinine and iron, but to get even three grains of quinine it would have been necessary to drink about a quart of Tona-Vin, while an entire bottle would have given only a normal dose of iron. O malaria, where is thy victory; O anemia, where is thy sting! Tona-Vin was manufactured under a permit issued to a concern that dealt in toilet articles. The label declared that its formula had been approved by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and each bottle bore a "certificate" from the "American Standardizing Bureaus," Washington, D. C., declaring that the product was made under their supervision

and complied with the provisions of the National Prohibition Act! The Tona-Vin slogan was: "Puts Dash and Go Into Tired, Weary, Sick and Run-Down Men."

A more recent nostrum of the same sort is Vita-Pep, which you are urged to buy by the case. Better still, you are urged to get a discount by purchasing six cases. Vita-Pep not only takes advantage of the Prohibition drought, but also plays up the public's interest in and ignorance of those comparatively newly discovered accessory food factors called vitamins. According to the Vita-Pep label, wine with an alcohol strength of 16 per cent. is the basis of the product. It also is claimed to contain pepsin, rennin and a concentrate of Vitamin B—three substances that cannot in the least interfere with the use of the wine as a beverage. The amount of Vita-Pep that you can drink would seem to be limited chiefly by your tolerance for alcohol. As a prospective customer, you are told that when you take a half-wineglassful of Vita-Pep with an equal amount of freshly pressed orange juice, you will get an "ample quantity" of both Vitamin B and Vitamin C. Possibly. It is also conceivable that a half-wineglassful of Vita-Pep will mellow your outlook on life, particularly if you are not used to alcoholic beverages. Some of the Vita-Pep testimonials are gems of naïveté. A "well-known Pennsylvania oil man" says that he thinks it "certainly worth while" and sends a check for another case. Another booster says that he "lives much more easily with it than without it," which seems reasonable; while a "prominent banker" sends in his check for a case with the statement that every member of his family uses it. According to its manufacturers, Vita-Pep "takes away that Tired, Run-down Feeling."

Then there is the old standby, Hostetter's Celebrated Stomach Bitters, still going strong with an alcohol content of 25 per cent. The history of this product is interesting. As long ago as 1878 the question of its use as a beverage was raised by the Alaska authorities. A letter from the

Commissioner of Internal Revenue of that time stated that, in Sitka, Hostetter's Bitters were sold "by the drink" in saloons. In 1883 the Commissioner of Internal Revenue concluded that, as the stuff contained no harmful drugs and only 4 per cent. of anything like a drug, he would probably be entirely justified in classing anyone who sold it as a retail liquor-dealer. But the Commissioner was hampered by the fact that for many years the government had classified Hostetter's Bitters as a "medicine" and had collected a stamp tax on it. That being the case, he felt that he was in a rather difficult position, for, said he:

Should I hold it to be a medicine, I should probably do violence to an almost irresistible tendency of the mind to conclude that no genuine medicine needs so much whisky and so few drugs in it, unless under very unusual circumstances. On the other hand, should I decide that it is no medicine at all, I would be confronted by a ten-years' *quasi* recognition by this office to the contrary, as well as by the practice of many people who use it as such.

The decision finally arrived at was worthy of Solomon. The Commissioner decided to "let the use give character to it." When Hostetter's Bitters was sold as a *bona fide* medicine he would take no action; when it was sold as a drink the seller would be taxed as a retail liquor-dealer. Hostetter's has contained at different times varying amounts of alcohol. In 1906 the state chemists of North Dakota reported finding 43 per cent.; in 1907, when the Food and Drugs Act went into effect, the label declared the presence of 39 per cent.; at present, the amount is 25 per cent., or one-half that of straight whisky—that is, straight whisky of pre-Volsteadian strength. Hostetter's contains some quinine and has been recommended for malaria. The chemists of the American Medical Association who analyzed it reported that, in order to get the minimum daily dose of quinine recommended by the Pharmacopœia as an anti-malarial, it would be necessary to take about twenty ounces of Hostetter's Bitters daily, or the equivalent of ten ounces of straight whisky, 100 proof.

The question, Can Hostetter's Bitters be used as a beverage? seems to have received a pragmatic answer. The Baltimore *Sun*, some years ago, carried a news item from Danville, Va., to the effect that the police in that town had had to deal with a large number of drunks and that each inebriate admitted that he became intoxicated on "a certain proprietary medicine that contains 25 per cent. of alcohol." Danville, it should be said, had recently gone dry. In order to learn just what proprietary medicine had been responsible for this oasis in the local desert, a telegram was sent to the chief of police of Danville. His laconic answer was: "Name of medicine Hostetter's Bitters."

But while new alcoholic nostrums have come on the market and some of the old ones still retain their pre-Volsteadian strength, others have undergone certain modifications. One nostrum, which for years contained alcohol—Warner's Safe Cure—has had its menstruum changed from alcohol to glycerine. Another, which brought such glowing testimonials from notables in the 'nineties—Paine's Celery Compound—went out of existence entirely. Still others reduced to some extent their percentages of alcohol. Thus, S. S. S. now contains 12 per cent. instead of the old 15 per cent., and Manola is reduced from 18 per cent. to 15 per cent. Peruna, which before Prohibition was at 20 per cent., has reduced its alcohol content for domestic consumption to 12 per cent., but still seems to put the old 20 per cent. kick into the product made for export.

Possibly the most interesting example of alcohol reduction is afforded by Wine of Cardui, which was once sold widely in the South for the alleged cure of women's ailments. For years it contained 20 per cent. of alcohol, beside the extractives of an insignificant amount of black haw and of an innocuous and long-discarded bitter, blessed thistle. In 1916, when the Wine of Cardui concern sued the *Journal* of the American Medical Association for some of the unkind things that publication had

said about it, the manufacturers undertook to prove in court how chemically impossible it was to lower the alcohol content of their "tonic." Learned counsel earnestly pleaded that, ten years previously, their clients had employed "one of the greatest chemists in the United States" in an effort to tone down Wine of Cardui's 20 per cent. kick. But it couldn't be done! They did get it down to 17 per cent., but the stuff spoiled on the druggists' shelves. The story was a moving one. Then along came the Eighteenth Amendment and the most powerful drug in Wine of Cardui, alcohol, was cut exactly in half and a preservative added to prevent its spoiling—thus demonstrating the superiority of law over chemistry and the feasibility of modifying morality by act of Congress.

IV

Legal restrictions, a public awake to the tricks of the game and a growing distrust in drug therapy have all caused the patent-medicine gentry to modify both their products and their appeal. As a result, the nostrum of 1924 differs widely, not only in composition but also in its method of presentation, from its prototype of 1904. But in spite of all their efforts the manufacturers find the demand for their wares failing in the United States, for the average American today spends fifty cents for patent-medicines where he spent a dollar fifteen years ago. Yet as an industry the patent-medicine business of the United States has not diminished, for as domestic demand has fallen off the manufacturers have sought foreign markets. American nostrums are now flooding the markets of the world and are especially in evidence where advertising standards are lowest. In the newspapers of Latin America are now to be found the same crude and blatant patent-medicine advertisements that graced the newspapers and magazines of the United States two decades ago.

Contrary to the general idea, public intelligence bears little, if any, relation to

the popularity of nostrums. It is knowledge, not intelligence, that diminishes credulity, especially when one goes into the market to purchase relief from real or imaginary suffering. Experience shows that the intelligentsia are more easily gulled by a quack who knows how to word his appeal than the illiterate. We are using fewer patent-medicines today than we were twenty years ago, not because we are less gullible, but merely because the bait is stale. On fresh bait we bite as avidly as ever. It is merely foolishness of a different kind. Where the Latin American accepts at its face value the astounding claims made for Peruna or something equally crude, we swallow, hook, line and sinker, the amazing nonsense of a Macfadden, the fantastic vagaries of an Abrams or the grotesque theories of a Palmer or a Still.

In order to cash in on the public's new tendency toward therapeutic nihilism, the American patent-medicine maker has put out a line of nostrums that he claims are not medicines. They are advertised as "food-tonics" or "tonic-foods" or "vitamin concentrates." One of the first and easily the best and most successful of the food- tonic humbugs was Sanatogen, a product that admittedly was nothing but 95 per cent. casein and 5 per cent. glycerophosphates. It was put over by an advertising campaign whose very impertinence was so stupendous as to command admiration. The appeal was especially to the intelligent. Advertisements were offered to and accepted by high-class magazines that would have scorned a contract for Pink Pills for Pale People. Yet the claims made for Sanatogen were no whit less preposterous than those that are made for the cruder proprietary remedies. Sanatogen flourished just as long as the advertising campaign was kept up. The product itself contained no "repeater" element; it had neither seductive nor powerful drugs; its physiologic action was only that of dried milk curd; there was nothing to sell it except the advertising, but that sold it in

vast quantities. A few cents' worth of dried cottage cheese, with a minute amount of a discarded and therapeutically valueless drug, was sold for a dollar, and for this dollar one got a product whose only virtue was its food value—and that was equivalent to the value of two cents' worth of dried beans. When the war came Sanatogen, being an enemy-owned product, was taken over by the Alien Property Custodian, the advertising ceased, and with it also the demand. An American patent-medicine firm later purchased the right to manufacture and sell the nostrum and attempted to resurrect it. But the public had lost interest.

An interesting but abortive attempt to float another "food- tonic" was exemplified in the conception and birth of Susto. This was put on the market by a concern that had for years sold a "tonic" containing small but unrecorded quantities of well-known drugs and a large and recorded quantity (18 per cent.) of alcohol. It had been featured as a cod-liver oil product without the oil,—"Hamlet" minus the melancholy Dane. The exploiters of this preparation, possibly fearing that the time might come when alcoholic tonics would no longer be good form and awake also to the public's interest in "food-tonics," decided to put out tablets containing malted milk and the vitamins of yeast under the name of Susto. In order to float the product under respectable auspices, a professor of physiologic chemistry in a well-known eastern medical college was given the commission of suggesting improvements in the product. The professor did his part by recommending that there be added a special brand of malted milk and a widely advertised proprietary yeast. The "improved" product was then tested on white rats, old ladies, undernourished infants and others.

Then the general public, through the newspapers, and coincidentally the medical profession, by "clinical reports" sent through the mail, were apprised of the accouchement of Susto. All the advertising

played up the professor, his college and the work claimed to have been done in "perfecting" and "indorsing" Susto. Physicians were gravely told that rats which had been fed Susto were found to gain in weight. As it was largely malted milk, such a result might not have been unexpected, even without experimental evidence and even by those less erudite than professors of physiologic chemistry. After the entire matter was aired in the *Journal* of the American Medical Association, it was not long before the exploiters of Susto, prohibited from playing up the alleged scientific foundation for their product, seemed to abandon their advertising campaign, and so Susto died a-borning.

V

Following the "food- tonic" fad and more or less contemporaneous with it came a flood of patent-medicines, usually in pill form, alleged to contain in concentrated form those comparatively newly discovered accessory food factors, the vitamins. There were probably two score of them, and many were sold under claims that were worthy of old Doc Hartman at the crest of Peruna's fame. The vast majority of these preparations were utterly worthless and contained no vitamins, at least by the time they reached the public. The best that could be said of them was that they were harmless; the worst, that they were swindles.

Today the popular nostrum is of the so-called glandular extract or endocrine type. This phase of the industry grew from a soil well prepared by sensational newspaper articles on the alleged marvels in sex rejuvenation that were going to result from the work of Steinach and Voronoff. None of the work of these men had any relation to the oral administration of gland substance, but the modern Fausts who would seek a renewal of sexual youth from Mephistophelian nostrum exploiters are ignorant of this fact. The new "gland" proprietary remedy is thus endowed with

aphrodisiac virtues. But there is not a scintilla of scientific evidence that testicular or ovarian substance when taken by the mouth has any such action.

Many if not most of these preparations actually contain gland substance or so-called extract, for it is not difficult for fakers to get presumably reputable business concerns to furnish them with the raw material for their faking. In one or two instances active drugs are mixed with the glandular substance, and the sexual neurasthenic who fondly imagines that the stimulation he receives comes from testicular substance actually gets his kick from a dash of strychnine. These gland extract patent-medicines are a passing fad; they are doomed to fail. Most of them contain no substances having any physiological effect, and so whatever results they accomplish are psychic, and depend upon the plausibility of the advertising and the gullibility of the purchaser. In all such cases the time must come when the static power of experience overcomes the dynamic energy of advertising, and this is the death knell of the nostrum. It then becomes necessary for the quack to change the name of his product, rechristen his company, revamp his appeal and spend another fortune on a new advertising campaign. If skilful, he will get his money back with a high rate of interest.

The proprietary medicine business will continue to flourish just so long as public credulity lasts. The charlatan was not born, as Voltaire said, when the first knave met the first fool, but when the first knave met the first ignoramus. It is lack of knowledge and not a dearth of brains that breeds credulity. Life has been defined by Spencer as the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations. The patent-medicine business adjusts its products and appeal—internal relations—to its external relations represented by public health laws, a more sophisticated public and a growing skepticism about drug therapy. Just so long as it obeys this biologic law will it thrive.

CONGRESSIONAL LETTERS

BY HILTON BUTLER

I AM a man of letters. My letters, however, are all purely congressional. As private secretary to a member of Congress I have taken thousands of them in dictation, written other thousands myself, and read an unknown number from constituents, cranks, Otto Kahn and the countless American societies whose chief purpose it is to write letters to anybody who will read them.

Congressional letters are the most carefully written documents in the American language. Unfortunately, the care lavished on them is not æsthetic, nor even grammatical, but only political. When the words of a congressman are intended for his colleagues and the *Congressional Record* only, he may speak with an abandon as reckless as the raising of his hands to high Heaven, but when they are intended for home consumption, he ponders every word carefully, and speaks to his secretary slowly, thoughtfully, and with a hand to his ear to receive the echo from the open spaces. The sole purpose of congressional letters is to please those who receive them, and so their chief constituent is what is called, in the New York dialect, schmoos. Of course, there are a few congressmen who boast of their frankness to their constituents and believe that saying that two and two make four is a virtue, but such daring spirits do not commonly retain their seats as long as their more diplomatic and saponaceous colleagues.

A heavy correspondence is the delight of a congressman's heart, and to him a proof of his strength with the people of his district. He not only answers the mail that pours in upon him spontaneously, but en-

courages all literate voters in his fold to write to him. He sends out farmers' bulletin lists and form letters inviting replies. He reads the district newspapers carefully for deaths, births and accidents. When a constituent dies, a letter of consolation, full of Christian solace, goes to the widow. If it is an accident, a letter of "deep sympathy for your tragic misfortune" is franked to the victim. If the family disaster is the birth of a child, the congressman dispatches some government bulletins on infant care, together with a form letter of congratulations and oftentimes of advice to the parents. One of the most chaste examples of this last letter is that used by the Hon. Clifton A. Woodrum, LL.B., of the sixth Virginia district:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

My dear Sir and Madam: Having learned of the birth of your baby, and naturally knowing the anxious days before you during its infancy, it has occurred to me that you may find some guidance and valuable suggestions in the two government publications which I am enclosing herewith.

The very slight trouble I have been to in this matter is but a practical expression of my congratulations upon the happy event in your home.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,
[Signed] Clifton A. Woodrum.

The Hon. Ross A. Collins, A.B., LL.B., of the fifth Mississippi district, is apparently somewhat more exultant over the birth of a child in his bailiwick than is Congressman Woodrum, for he writes a much longer letter and says that "only by a general improvement in the upbuilding of the young can our country wax righteously strong." Mr. Collins is the congressman who, in a campaign for reelection