

PATENT OFFICE MAGIC—MEDICAL

BY ARTHUR J. CRAMP

Old wives and starres are his counsellors; his nightspell is his guard, and charms his physician. He wears Paracelsian characters for the toothache; and a little hallowed wax is his antidote for all evils.—*Bishop Hall*.

ASK the man in the street why the government grants a patent and he will probably reply: "So that inventive genius may be rewarded." In this he will be largely wrong. The reason the United States gives the inventor of a new and useful art, machine or article a seventeen-year monopoly in the sale of his invention, in exchange for a full and free description of it, is not primarily to reward the inventor but to stimulate progress. This is obvious from the wording of the Constitution: "The Congress shall have power . . . to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries." By its language the Constitution limits Congress to the protection of "useful" inventions. Invention naturally implies originality and novelty—the creation of something which has not heretofore existed. One other common fallacy held in connection with the matter of patents is that of regarding a granted patent as an expression of governmental approval and protection.

It is not the purpose of this article to show that the way in which the United States patent law is applied to inventions and discoveries in materia medica hinders progress in therapeutics. Yet the fact is that the application works a hardship on the public because it allows a patent to be granted on a product and so creates a monopoly in a *thing*. Many, if not most, foreign countries refuse to grant patents

on medical or medicinal products, although some do grant them on the processes of making such products. A single example of the detriment our law works on the American public is the case of aspirin. Practically no other country in the world, and certainly not Germany, the original home of aspirin, granted or would grant a patent either on the product aspirin or on the process of making it. The United States granted both. The result was that for seventeen years no one in this country except the Bayer Company could either manufacture or sell aspirin under its chemical name, its proprietary name, or any other name. During this period the public in Germany, France, Denmark and most of the other countries in Europe was buying aspirin at four cents an ounce while the people of the United States were paying forty-three cents an ounce for the same product.

But neither the public's misapprehension of the reason-for-being of the Patent Office nor the inequity of the patent laws as at present applied to medicinal products is the subject of this paper. Rather it is to point out how far that office has failed in applying current medical knowledge, not to say common sense, in the granting of patents for things medical. If at the outset you feel that it is unfair to hold against the Patent Office of 1926 its blunders of 1796, please withhold judgment. It will be shown later on that no more intelligence is being exhibited in the Twentieth Century in the granting of certain kinds of so-called medical patents than was shown in the issuance of certain letters patent way back in the Eighteenth Century.

II

In February, 1796, the United States granted a patent to Elisha Perkins on certain "metallic points to remove pain." These were generally known at that time as Perkins' Metallic Tractors. Perkins was a Connecticut Yankee and a physician of parts. In Plainfield, Conn., where he practiced, he was held in high professional repute—until he began to exploit his tractors. When he was elected, in 1795, as a delegate to the Connecticut Medical Society, Perkins chose that time and place to announce his invention. Two years later the local medical society to which he belonged denounced the tractors as quackery and expelled their inventor.

Perkins' tractors were pieces of metal, in shape and size not unlike horseshoe-nails, rounded at the larger end and tapering to a point at the smaller. They were used in pairs, each member being made of different metallic combinations. Just what metals were used in their manufacture was never disclosed even in the patent specifications, although one tractor seemed to be chiefly brass and the other largely iron. Perkins made them himself in a small furnace concealed behind sliding panels in the walls of his house. The tractors were used with a stroking motion, being applied to the part affected and drawn across to a part of the body not involved. Gillray's classic caricature, "Metallic Tractors," published in London in 1801, shows them in use.

The popularity of the tractors was instantaneous and hearty. Notable members of the clergy, distinguished lawyers, university professors, members of the legislatures—all united to praise Perkins' invention as a marvel of therapeutic potency. Nor was their fame confined to the land of their conception. Important members of the Danish medical profession connected with the Royal Frederick Hospital at Copenhagen conducted a series of clinical studies with the tractors and in 1799 published an exhaustive and laudatory report.

As American interest in the tractors waned, Perkins' son Benjamin Douglas (Yale, 1794) conceived the idea—as many have done since—that the British Isles should furnish a lush field for Yankee quackery. About the time that the Danes were putting a halo on the senior Perkins, Perkins junior went to London to exploit his father's invention. He rented the house previously occupied by the eminent John Hunter and immediately did a thriving business. By selling the tractors for five guineas a pair he accumulated a fortune of £10,000 and before the bubble burst returned to the United States and became a Quaker!

In 1803 the first Perkinian Institute was opened in London, with Lord Rivers on its board. In the reports which were issued at intervals it was claimed that more than a million and a half cures had been effected by means of the tractors. Testimonials from university professors, from a scattering of physicians and surgeons, and from clergymen and others of equal standing formed part of the numerous reports published by the Perkinian Institute. Only a few physicians became Perkinians, but those who did were of the type in whom the art of self-advertisement is highly developed. As a result the publicity that "tractoration" got was out of all proportion to its importance. The great bulk of the medical profession would have none of it.

The eminent English physician, John Haygarth, of Bath, and his associate, Dr. Falconer, were convinced of the fraudulence of the pretenses of Perkins. They devised an imitation pair of tractors made of wood and treated a number of cases of gout and rheumatism with them. Two assistants, who had not been let into the secret, were almost converted to Perkinism when they saw the patients improve under the treatment. Dr. Alderson, another unbeliever, also employed wooden tractors with results that brought public thanks in church. One poor old woman, who claimed to have suffered for months from pain in the arm

and shoulders, was relieved in less than five minutes by an application of the wooden tractors. The exposures of Haygarth and others were the undoing of Perkinism. With the mystery gone the public ceased to be interested, and the tractors were soon relegated to the limbo of forgotten medical fads.

III

In November, 1854, the magi of the Patent Office granted patent No. 11942 to Dr. Alpheus Myers, for a tapeworm trap. The device was a small gold cylinder in two parts, with rounded ends and not unlike in size and shape the gelatin capsules that are used for administering powdered drugs. The top had a fine cord attached, while the lower portion had a small opening in the side. Bait (kind not specified) was placed in the trap and the patient, after a fast of several days, swallowed it, retaining a hold on the free end of the cord so as to remove it when he got a bite. The theory was that the hungry *tania*, having been deprived for several days of its normal nourishment, and casting about for a meal, would reach for the bait through the opening in the lower half of the trap. This disengaged a spring which caused a toothed cylinder within the trap to be forced upward, thus seizing the worm. Then both tapeworm and trap could be withdrawn. Not content with granting a product patent on the device, the government went further and granted to Dr. Myers a process patent (No. 11943) on the method of using the trap.

IV

Whatever one may think of Myer's tapeworm trap as an addition to *materia medica*, it admittedly was ingenious. Not so the device on which the United States, in 1897, granted to Hercules Sanche patent No. 587,237. Sanche was born too late; had he lived at the time of the Round Table he would have given Merlin a run for his

money. The man was a genius. As a preliminary to his application for a patent, this shrewd old dispenser of modern magic first invented an hypothesis which not even an accommodating patent office could protect. Sanche's theory as it appears in the specifications was to this effect:

The habits of civilized life—*i.e.*, the wearing of shoes and clothing of nonconducting material and the insulation from the earth by dry floors and feather beds—prevent the body from partaking freely of the electrical equilibrium of the earth.

Disease, in other words, according to Sanche's theory, is a disturbance of the body's "electrical equilibrium"—whatever that may mean. He explained in the patent specifications that hogs, turtles, alligators and other animals that live in the mud "are notoriously free from disease and nervousness." That hogs are free from disease any stock raiser of experience can deny. That a turtle is free from nervousness may be true; next to the oyster, the turtle is probably as free from nervous instability as any member of the animal kingdom. Sanche then explained that his "Apparatus For Treating Diseases"—the title of the patent—was of such a character that it would not only "comprehend the preservation of electrical equilibrium" between the body and the earth, but it would also remove "abnormal conditions by producing an electrical tension in the body contrary to that which superinduced the disease."

Although Sanche thus glibly talked in electrical terms, he was careful to explain that his invention had "nothing whatever to do with galvanism or dynamic currents." In other words, he disclaimed any electrical factors in the invention. While the specifications illustrated and referred to various types of devices to be used under his theory of treating disease, there was nothing in them to show of what the devices were composed, how they were made, or in what way they worked. Nevertheless, Sanche got his patent. The device when put on the market was called the Oxydonor—the Giver of Oxygen.

In the meantime he had revamped his theory. This was doubtless to get away from the "electrical equilibrium" factor of the patent specification; for the presence or absence of electricity is a matter of demonstrable fact. His new theory was more plausible and easily understood by the type of intelligence he sought to exploit. It was to the effect that there existed in Nature a force—known only to Sanche—which he christened "diaduction." This force could be put into action only by means of Sanche's device and would cause the human body to absorb oxygen. Further, lack of oxygen—Theory No. 3—is the cause of all human ills from alopecia to zoster. *Ergo*: Use the Oxydonor, let loose diaduction and the trick is done! The Oxydonor was an hermetically sealed, nickel-plated, metal cylinder with rounded ends. It was three inches long and one inch thick and was filled with plaster of paris or something equally inert. Attached to one end was a piece of flexible, insulated electric wire, which on its free end had a small disc that, by means of an elastic band or buckle, could be fastened to the wrist or ankle. The method of operation was to place the Oxydonor in cold water while the disc was attached to the ankle or wrist—and diaduction did its stuff.

In the earlier days of exploitation Sanche went so far as to insist that his device would "absorb oxygen from the water and force it by the law of induction through the system." As his claims began to be examined more critically, he modified this and said: "The Oxydonor causes the body to absorb large quantities of oxygen through the myriad pores of the skin." Diaduction threw mightily and Oxydonors at \$35 apiece sold like Florida real estate. Hypochondriacs found in the Oxydonor the material equivalent of the verbal mumbo-jumbo of the mental healers.

Sanche, with the imagination of genius, expanded his business by founding a fraternity whose function it was to further the use of Oxydonor and spread the gospel of diaduction, *Fraternitas Duxanimæ*—the

Fraternity of Duxanimæ. Sanche explained his fraternity in a single sentence of four hundred and fifty-eight words, of which I will quote but the opening clauses:

The Fraternity of Duxanimæ is a Cosmopolitan Organization of the beneficiaries of the new Method of curing disease and of bracing life to any reasonable requirement, on strictly natural principles, without medication, or electrical devices, or anything previously employed to treat human ills, and without anything except what I have invented and named Diaductive Connections, made with certain Diaductive connectors, connecting the human organism, or any other living thing, with suitable inanimate matter in suitable quantity and condition, to form a diamagnetic pair, acting as an artificial Organic Device. . . .

Like all fraternities, it had a vow. The taking of this Vow of Duxanimæ (*Votum Fraternitatis Duxanimæ*) was "the prime, inflexible condition" to enrolment. It is much too long and elaborate to reproduce, but its salient points were to the effect that the votary would do everything in his power to oppose the sale and use of imitations of Oxydonors and to extend in every way the benefits "of the School and Practice of Duxanimæ by Diaduction." In a word, he pledged himself to do everything possible to drum up further trade for Sanche. Finding human nature so trusting, Sanche went further. He had forms printed by which his disciples could bind themselves to make "donations to the cause of diaduction." These donations were to be applied by Hercules Sanche "for his own use in paying his personal and other expenses in travel and other incidental costs incurred by his promoting the general cause of Duxanimæ by Diaduction. . . ."

So successfully and painlessly did Sanche separate the fool and his money that numerous imitators arose. As a result, the Oxydonor reached the equity courts and learned judges had an opportunity of expressing their opinion of diaduction. Mr. Justice Shiras, later a member of the Supreme Court of the United States, said:

I am entirely certain that I do not understand the working of this so-called force, if any such exists, and I greatly doubt whether Dr. Sanche has any clear conception of the force or principle

which he seeks to describe under the name of "diaduction."

While another judge expressed himself thus:

[The theory] is a mere pretense, that is to say, a theory not entertained by the inventor in good faith, but put forward as an imaginary hypothesis merely for the purpose of obtaining a patent on a very simple contrivance, which was not patentable unless the claim was reinforced by some such pretended discovery.

Finally, eighteen years after one branch of the United States government had granted a patent on what later became the Oxydonor, and declared it a new and useful invention, another branch of the same government—the Post Office Department—declared the "invention" a fraud and its inventor a faker and in 1915 barred both from the United States mails.

V

The Oxydonor patent was issued in 1897. Three years later, in 1900, the Patent Office granted a patent (No. 647,101) for what was described as a "battery case for electro-medical apparatus." In the specifications the invention was said to relate to improvements in supplying electric currents to the human body. The alleged improvements were supposed to consist first, of an end to a cylinder, and, second, a means of securing such an end to the cylinder as to prevent its ready removal. This device was commercially known as the Oxygenor, and was one of the numerous imitations of Sanche's Oxydonor. Like its prototype, it had nothing electrical about it. Like the Oxydonor, too, it was a metal cylinder hermetically sealed, of course, and nickel-plated. But instead of having but one wire attached to it, it had two wires, one at each end of the cylinder. Each wire on its free end had the inevitable buckle; one to be attached to the wrist, the other to the ankle. The theory of its use was identical with that put forward by Sanche—stolen, frankly, in its entirety.

The cylinder itself, like the Oxydonor, was filled with inert material, which on

dissection was found to be a mixture of sand, sulphur and charcoal. In the advertising hokum of the Oxygenor this sand and sulphur mixture became "a delicately adjusted but permanent combination of rare and costly metals." The Direction Book contained a chart of more than a hundred pathologic states, running the gamut of human suffering. In fact, the exploiters modestly admitted that the range of the device in the cure of disease was "from headache to paralysis, from blood poison to change of life, from chickenpox to varicose veins, from colic to Bright's disease, from malaria to dyspepsia." In due course the postal authorities got around to this swindle and the solicitor for the Post Office Department in his memorandum to the Postmaster-General declared that "the device is utterly worthless for the treatment of disease in any form, and all of the representations as to its wonderful therapeutic value are false and fraudulent." On June 5, 1915, a little more than fifteen years after the Patent Office had accepted it as a new and useful invention, the thing was declared a fraud and the use of the mails closed to it.

VI

A citizen of Switzerland (a country which does not grant patents on medicinal preparations) was granted United States patent No. 1,081,069 on December 9, 1913. Quoting from the specifications:

The present invention relates to a composition which is intended to be used internally and which confers to the organisms immunity against the following microbial infectious illnesses: *diphtheria, pneumonia, typhus, scarlet fever, influenza, septic infections, cerebro-spinal meningitis, syphilis, pest, cholera and tuberculosis; it is also effective in another kind of disease, viz, goiter. [Italics mine.]*

This marvel was merely a solution of small quantities of creatinin and allantoin and a minute amount of guanidin in water. By the time the patent was granted the inventor was dead and his estate got it. Since, by the use of his own preparation he should have been immune to practically

all diseases, he probably died of senility. Although by its action the Patent Office virtually declared that one may be immunized against pneumonia, influenza, cerebro-spinal meningitis, syphilis and tuberculosis, the morbidity rate in these diseases still continues high. What shall be thought of the controlling intelligence that granted a patent on such a mixture?

VII

In the not-too-particular rural weeklies advertisements have run for some years of the Galvano necklace, said to be "the latest discovery for the relief or cure of goiter by mild electrical treatment." The necklace came from a small town in Wisconsin. The Pooh-Bah in its exploitation was one Frederick C. Werner, "consulting physician," "president," "manager," "director" and "inventor" of the device on which the United States granted patent No. 1,190,831, on July 11, 1916. Those who answered the advertisements received a letter signed "F. C. Werner, M.D., Consulting Physician," stating that the inquiry had been referred to Werner by the company. One visualizes the gentleman opening a letter in his capacity as president, director and manager of the company and then gravely referring it to himself in his further capacity as consulting physician.

The patent granted to Werner was on "An Appliance for Treating Goiter." According to the specifications, the Galvano necklace consists of beads made of glass or other insulating material between which are placed, alternately, small zinc and copper discs. Through the discs and beads runs a wire. The necklace is to be used in connection with an ointment containing iodide of mercury and chloride of calcium, that is applied to the skin of the neck. The necklace is then hung so that the part containing the zinc and copper discs comes in contact with the anointed skin. The alleged purpose of the invention is that of "generating galvanic currents in contact with the skin in the presence of mercurous

iodide and calcium chloride." On the basis of this fantastic piece of pseudo-science the Patent Office granted a patent. The thing sells for \$7.50. The necklace itself is a cheap and tawdry affair that as an adornment could not for a minute compete with the "jewelry" displayed on the five-and-ten counters of Messrs. Woolworth and Kresge. Its therapeutic virtues are no greater and no less than those of a string of wampum.

VIII

Early in 1917 the United States issued patent No. 1,212,888 for the cra-making discovery of a method of flavoring Epsom salt. The inventor avowed that the "prime object" of his "invention" was to "disguise the normal taste and impart an agreeable odor or smell to salts commonly employed as a cathartic." He further claimed that he had added to the salts an antiseptic and anesthetic agent which would so act as to cure "flatulency, indigestion, sick and sour stomach, colic and the destruction of worms, etc."

In theory the law requires that, to be patentable, an invention shall not only be new and useful but shall show in its inception a higher degree of skill than is naturally to be expected from those who are skilled in the arts to which the inventions belong. Not a day passes that some physician in the United States when writing a prescription does not do substantially the same thing as is claimed for this "invention." When a doctor prescribes Epsom salt to be taken in one of the official aromatized waters, he does not in the eyes of the law produce or create a new invention. While in a sense every prescription is an invention to meet the conditions presented by the patient, it is not patentable because it represents but the ordinary skill of a physician in carrying on his vocation. Yet a seventeen-year monopoly on the sale of this flavored Epsom salt was granted by the United States Patent Office.

IX

It is a matter of general knowledge, not only to medical men but to the more intelligent part of the general public, that there is no drug at present known that can be considered a remedy for tuberculosis. Yet, on February 15, 1921, the United States Patent Office issued patent No. 1,368,974 for an invention that provided "a remedy which will prove effective in the treatment of tuberculosis." The patent was granted to one Evaghoras Serghison, of San Francisco. It was immediately commercialized and put on the market as Savrite. Naturally, much was made of the fact that the United States government had issued a patent on the compound. The inventor's story was to the effect that he had discovered this "specific remedy for tuberculosis" by experimenting on himself and curing himself of the disease.

Part of the advertising come-on purported to be a testimonial from a medico who was described as an eminent physician. Investigation indicated that the eminence was pure fiction, conferred by the consumption cure concern, as a careful search of medical literature and other sources of information failed to disclose that the man had any claim to distinction. In fact, aside from the usual biographical data that is available on all licensed physicians, the only other record appeared in clippings of California newspapers in 1922, to the effect that this particular practitioner had been bound over to the Federal court, charged with illegally prescribing booze.

From the Patent Office specifications we find that this consumption cure, which "never yet had a failure," was thus prepared:

| | | |
|--|----|--------|
| Pure olive oil | 1 | gallon |
| Squill root | 3 | pounds |
| Bitter almonds | 1¼ | pounds |
| Nettle (the plant except the root) | 1½ | pounds |
| Red poppy flower (petals) | 1 | pound |

In preparing the remedy the several ingredients are placed in a suitable container and thoroughly mingled by shaking or agitation. The container is then corked or closed in an air-tight manner

and placed adjacent a stove so that the heat therefrom will warm the water and accordingly warm the mixture gradually. The mixture is left thus standing for a considerable period of time. In actual use I have found that twenty-two hours is about the proper time. At the expiration of this period the mixture is thoroughly mixed and squeezed and thereupon filtered: the liquid produced being used as the remedy.

Patent specifications are supposed to be so drawn that on the expiration of the patent it is possible for any one skilled in the art to make a similar product from the description given. Study the specifications just quoted. Which one of the five hundred odd species of nettle is used by Mr. Serghison? Or does it matter? Just how close should the mixture be placed to the stove and how hot should the stove be? How will one determine what is the "considerable period of time" during which the process of digestion must continue? What are the laboratory or organoleptic tests to determine whether the process is incomplete, carried too far, or just right? These and a dozen other questions could pertinently be asked of the Patent Office. As a matter of fact, some of the questions were asked by the organized medical profession of the United States through the American Medical Association. The reply was to the effect that the Patent Office "does not undertake to justify its actions in granting any particular patent." Here we have a recrudescence of that hoary old economic slogan, "the public be damned," as exhibited by a component branch of the United States government.

Further investigation of the facts leading up to the granting of the Savrite patent brought out some interesting points. It seems that when Mr. Serghison first applied for a patent, the official examiner, who happened to be a physician, repeatedly refused—to his credit—to grant the patent. The applicant, therefore, took an appeal over the head of the examiner, and, as is provided by the Revised Statutes, this appeal was heard by the examiners-in-chief, a board consisting of five judges appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. When the case was argued

before this board Serghison filed an affidavit signed by the same physician whose testimonial has already been commented on. In this the doctor swore that he had "successfully administered the said composition to at least three patients suffering with tuberculosis, and that the said composition has resulted in certain curative effects which have not been possible to obtain by a composition or medical preparation heretofore used by him or known to him." On the basis of this affidavit the Board of Appeals decided that a patent should issue.

One would suppose that even the most superficial investigation would have proved that this mixture of olive oil, squill, almonds and what not, did not represent an invention that was either useful or original. It does not tend in any way to promote the progress of science and the useful arts, but might be expected definitely to deter such progress.

X

From the consumption cure patent of 1921 and its tragic possibilities one turns with relief to an equally preposterous but laughable one granted in 1923 for an alleged obesity cure. United States patent No. 1,465,530, issued to one Herbert Wilson Smith of Washington, D.C., is, according to the specifications, on an "invention" that "relates to a composition of matter for producing a medicated bath of particular value in the treatment of obesity." This particular obesity cure is of the bath salt type. There are many such on the market—all of them as worthless and innocuous for the purpose for which they are sold as so much plain water.

The preparation on which the patent was granted is known commercially as San-I-Sal. It is said to "take off weight just where reduction is most needed." Of course, exercise and diet can be forgotten: "No tiresome exercise—no starvation diet

—no mysterious internal treatment." And, thrown in for good measure, San-I-Sal "relieves rheumatic pains, breaks up colds" and those who use it "become greatly rejuvenated." What is this new and useful composition of matter not previously known or used by others? Let the patent specifications tell:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Epsom salt | 90 per cent |
| Baking soda | 2 per cent |
| Table salt | 5 per cent |
| Canada balsam | 2 per cent |
| Oil of pine needles | 1 per cent |

The pine oil, we gather from the same source of knowledge, is to "open the pores of the skin," while the Epsom salt is to cause sweating. The table salt is "for the purpose of counteracting the tendency of the skin toward looseness, which usually occurs from long continued bathing in hot water." Furthermore, the mixture may be used "to obtain a velvety, clear complexion." These claims, it should be borne in mind, are not from a patent medicine advertisement, but from the specifications issued by the United States Patent Office!

In the advertising of San-I-Sal the obese victim is told to fill the tub with water as hot as can be comfortably borne. San-I-Sal is then placed in the water and the optimistic stylish-stout gets into the tub and stays there for half an hour, adding hot water to keep the bath as hot as she can bear it. She then goes to bed and sweats for half an hour. That such sweating will reduce the weight of the body to the extent of the sweat excreted is, of course, obvious. It would be equally obvious even though this new and useful invention of Mr. Smith plays no part in the performance. It is equally true, too, that within a very few hours the body will have received enough additional water to make up the loss. Epsom salt, baking soda and table salt, perfumed with Canada balsam and oil of pine needles, a new and useful invention in the reduction of obesity, so declared by the United States Patent Office!

CLOUD-CAPP'D TOWERS

BY EMILY CLARK

BROWN and still the garden lay in its mild October interlude. The second blooming of a few stubborn rose-bushes occasionally interrupted the monochromatic scene, but the October violets, lost under their thick leaves, gave no hint that they too were lingering to receive the late frost that comes to Southern Virginia. A charming wide house of white-columned buff stucco shone through the opening in two tall clumps of box forming a half-arch at one of the four entrances to the garden. On a wooden bench of a damp, dark-grey, unwholesome tint on the inner side of the arch Doctor Vesey sat, smoking one of his slim, brown Porto Rican cigarettes. Doctor Vesey, unlike other men of his generation, never smoked cigars, and his cigarette was a component part of an attitude always entirely debonair. The fact is that Doctor Vesey, who had been born many years after the War, and was by profession a schoolmaster, held intact in the flawless amber of his personality the authentic *beau sabreur* of a much earlier period. His thin, grey face, his thoroughbred nose, his shadowed dark eyes that tormented a close observer with the hazy memory of a portrait seen somewhere of a Tuscan nobleman of the Seventeenth Century, his thick grey hair and his close-clipped grey mustache made him easily the most picturesque figure in a community still sufficiently provincial for picturesque figures to occur with reasonable frequency.

Doctor Vesey was not only a schoolmaster, but a schoolmaster of girls rather than boys, further proof of an attitude perfectly achieved, an attitude eternally triumphant over the trivial realities of life.

When, as a young man, he had turned his grandfather's amiably rambling house into a school for young ladies, even his friends and kinsmen, members, like himself, of the tribe which is assuredly the most casual of all this earth's inhabitants, a tribe which, temperamentally, knows not scepticism, were vaguely, spasmodically uneasy as to the outcome of Doctor Vesey's venture. Capital was not a plentiful commodity, but he had somehow managed to enlarge the building. He did not, true enough, enlarge it to an extent where entirely sanitary conditions could prevail. Doctor Vesey could remember the day when it was taken for granted that two people could exist comfortably in one room, more often than otherwise in one bed. He could also remember when bathing was an almost military duty rather than a sybaritic relaxation. And he saw no reason why young women—even young ladies—whose appearance was, as a rule, an accomplishment far less perfect than his own, should not live happily in conditions which had never proved detrimental to himself.

Into the matter of the financial support which every institution must have no one had inquired too closely. Whether those early debts for the foundation of the school had ever been paid no one knew, and to all public appearances no one cared. The school went on somehow. It had even managed—and this is no legend of the Old Southland, but prosaic fact—until six years ago to retain the two words, "female seminary," in its five-word title, without obviously frightening away too many patrons. For the school derived both its