

ADVERTISING MEDICINES IN THE 1800s.

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Abstract:

Pharmaceutical marketing is the fastest growing sector of advertising industry, leading to excessive consumption of over-the-counter drugs. If we look back to the nineteenth century we will see that advertisements accompanied pharmaceutical industry from the start. Drugs were advertised by pharmaceutical companies, yet advertising was mainly the domain of those manufacturing "miraculous remedies" and promising full recovery. Information on medicines was found on calendars, playing cards, colouring books, games, posters and toys. There appeared extensive literature, chiefly in the form of leaflets, booklets and brochures of various kinds, thanks to which the patient could learn how a medicine worked, what diseases it acted against, and most importantly, where it could be bought.

Keywords: pharmaceutical marketing, advertising medicines, history of pharmacy, history of medicine.

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Today in Poland pharmaceutical marketing is the fastest growing sector of advertising industry, leading to excessive consumption of over-the-counter drugs. Can we say that medicinal drug advertising, so common today, is a brand new phenomenon? If we look back to the nineteenth century we will see that advertisements accompanied pharmaceutical industry from the start. Drugs were advertised by pharmaceutical companies, yet advertising was mainly the domain of those manufacturing "miraculous remedies" and promising full recovery.

Developing from the mid-1800s, pharmaceutical industry started mass production of medicines and inspired entrepreneurs who saw this sector of economy as a business opportunity for their future. They introduced to the market a wide assortment of pharmaceutical preparations whose effectiveness would be supported with pseudoscientific theories, usually having no rational basis. Advertising, governed by no restrictions, was the driving force for these systems (also referred to as "specifics") and for the medicinal business. While promoting their products, merchants selling quack medicines used any imaginable methods. Information about drugs could be seen on calendars, playing cards, colouring books, block puzzles, board games, posters and toys. Songs and theatre plays were written about them. Medicine adverts influenced the number of effectively sold brochures, books as well as papers; the latter in many cases were in fact

financed by such advertisements. For instance in the USA, where sales of patent medicines reached a very high level, in the 1880s there were 5,000 remedies on the market. Manufacturers' annual earnings from sales totalled at 22 million dollars, and the amount designated for advertising was up to 10 million dollars [1]. Consequently, publishers would not be willing to criticize pushy advertising methods or hazardous medicinal agents contained in the advertised products. Printed materials were published in large quantities, in the late nineteenth century reaching the level between ten and twenty million copies [2]. Most frequently these were various flyers, leaflets and brochures.

Foreign companies promoting their remedies in Poland published brochures in Polish. Examples of these include: *Pierwsza pomoc! Doradca nad użytkowaniem doświadczonej przez cesarskie ustanowienie uwolnionych lekarstw* promoting drugs manufactured by A. Wasmuth & Co. *Drogenhandel* as well as the leaflet entitled *Co słychać nowego w świecie* promoting preparations from H. Warner Company (former manufacturer of strongboxes) based in Rochester.

Both companies offered a complete assortment of remedies satisfying any person with health problems. Patients' Companion says: "In this manual each and every suffering person will find truly miraculous remedies which have already saved thousands of patients from their dangerous diseases". These were for instance

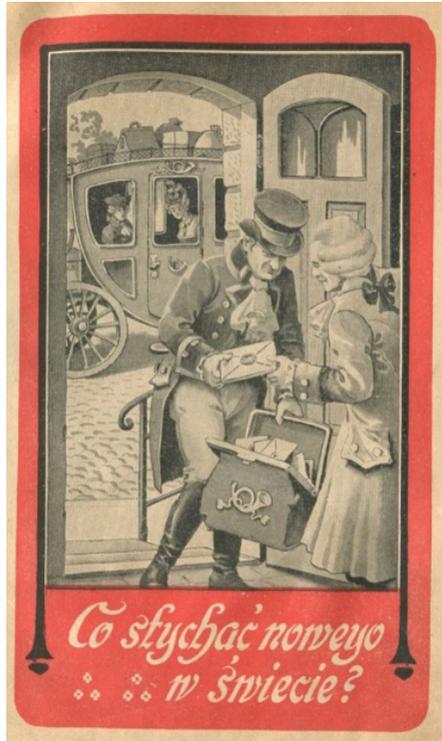


Fig. 3. Title-page from brochure promoting drugs manufactured by H. Warner Company

J. PSERHOFERA

krew czyszczące pigułki

dawniej zwane

„pigułki uniwersalne.“

1. Ogrzewają żołądek i oziębioną krew, odprowadzają kwasy, flegmę i zbyteczną żółć z żołądka bardzo delikatnym sposobem przez ciało i dają w ten sposób możność wytwarzania się całkiem nowej i polepszonej krwi. Ponieważ jedynie z żołądka, jeżeli ten choć raz nie jest w stanie spełniać swych czynności przy trawieniu potraw, wszelakie niemocy i wady ciała powstają, to netylko

2. te krew czyszczące pigułki dają żołądkowi możność spełniania należytego napowrót wszelkich czynności, lecz podniecają także

3. na nowo utracaną chęć do jedzenia i picia.

4. Rozpedzają wzdymania, z których wynika ból krzyżów, nudności w żołądku i pierś, ściąganie, bóle brzucha i zatkanie tegoż, odbijanie się z żołądka, gorzkość i zaflegmienie w ustach, ekliwosć, zbieranie się na wymioty, ociężałość i darcie członków, ból głowy, zawrót głowy, zasępienie umysłu, klucie w boku i wszelkie słabości. Również stwierdzają one

5. swą znakomitą siłę w złotej żyłce. Niemniej okazują

6. zbawienne działanie w hypokondryi, chorobie śledziony, melancholii, zapobiegając przytem wyrażającym się z tych chorób skutkom, oraz przyczynom powód do nich dawać mogącym; ponieważ czyszczą zatkanie wnętrzości, jak śledzionę, wątrobę i drobne trzewia w sposób podziwienia godny, choroby te więc tym sposobem radykalnie usuwają. Również można na pewno liczyć, że za pomocą tych pigułek

7. wszystkie ostre wyciekania, wyrzuty skórne, t. z. węgry na twarzy, krosty, wysypki, reumatyzm podlegające i strupiate głowy, dziecicne wrzody, liszaje, suche bólażki, dymienie, wrzodzenie, zanokice i wszelkie podobnego rodzaju choroby i nieczystości, które z zepsutych soków wywiązują się, bodajby nawet zastarzałe i zakorzenione, jak to zwykle bywa z uyciem służących do tego zewnętrznych, suszących, czyszczących i gojących środków, niezawodnie

na zawsze wygubić i wyleczyć; przytem nie trzeba się zupełnie obawiać, aby używając zaleconych zewnętrznych środków, jakie niebezpieczeństwo groziło z przyczyny przejścia jadu na zewnątrz; pigułki te bowiem muszą go z ciała częścią przez odprowadzenie, częścią przez powolne wzbudzenie parowań skóry uprzatnąć.

8. Dowiodły ich skuteczności świetne i nigdy nie zawodzące próby w żółtaczce, gdzie budowa i jakość ciała pozwalają; bierze się na każdą noc i rano zawsze po 1, 2 do 3 sztuk pigulek, a ozdrowienie na czwarty lub piąty dzień nastąpi niezawodnie.

9. Niezameżne i zameżne kobiety w nieregularnem lub całkiem opóźniającem się czyszczeniu miesięcznem, w białych upławach, w bladejce itp., jakoteż dziewczęta, u których należne przypadłości nie rozwijają się, a wiek po temu mąg; niemniej kobiety, u których natura ma się zmienić, a które w tym czasie na wiele nieprzyjemności, a czasem na najniebezpieczniejsze choroby bywają narażone, używać mogą pigulek z pewnym, niezawodnym skutkiem. Pierwsze według jakości i stosownych okoliczności przez 1, 2, 3 tygodnie, a drągie tylko od czasu do czasu przez kilka dni.

10. Również ciężarne kobiety mogą być pewne, że netylko zdrowy i wolny i wszelkich ociężalności czas ciąży mieć będą, lecz także spodziewać się mogą sześciliwego a lekkiego rozwiązania, i że w następujących później tygodniach zdrowiem cieszyć się będą, jako też, że płód ich zdrowym będzie. W tym celu używać powinny pigulek tych w czasie ciąży przez 4 do 6 tygodni co kilka dni rano i na noc, każdym razem po 1 do 2 sztuk.

11. Udzielają prawie jawnej i szybkiej pomocy tym, którzy cierpią parcie jakiegokolwiek rodzaju, kureze żołądka, dolegliwości maciczne, darcie wnętrzości. Również mogą

12. cierpiący na puchlinę wietrzną i wodną, jeżeli używają tych pigulek, liczyć na pewne

Fig. 5. Advertisement of the Pserhoffer pills (Kalendarz Krakowski, 1889)



REFORMACKIE
PIGUŁKI z MARKA
„ZAKONNIK”
ZNANE od 1602 r.

Reguluja
Chronia od
Cierpień
Nadmiernej
Uderzeń
Ujmierzają

**ŻOŁĄDEK
REUMATYZMU
WĄTROBY
OTYŁOŚCI, ARTRETYZMU
KRWI DO GŁOWY
HEMOROIDY CZYSZCZA KREW**

PRZY SKŁONNOŚCIACH DO OBSTRUKCJI JĄ ŁAGODNYM
ŚRODKIEM PRZECZYSZCZAJĄCYM

ŻĄDAĆ WSZĘDZIE z „ZAKONNIKIEM”

ZNAN OCHRONNY

Fig. 6. Advertisement of the Reformer Monks' pills (Pharmacy Museum, Jagiellonian University)

the drug. Equally frequent were letters from patients grateful for effective treatment. In a few consecutive issues of "Gazeta Narodowa" from 1864, the heading "New evidence for beneficial effects of pectoral syrup of G.W.A Majer in Wrocław" was followed with opinions expressed by patients taking the remedy. There was no information about drug composition, unless a new healing plant was one of the ingredients. Besides such short communications, some adverts were in a form of long "scientific papers" discussing the mechanism of therapeutic effect of the drug, explaining theories related to the origins of diseases, and describing the treatment procedure. This approach is well exemplified by advertisements of products manufactured by J. Pserhofer, an apothecary from Vienna who used this method to promote his "blood purifying pills"(3). His four-page advertisements were included in the 1880s for instance in "Kalendarz Krakowski" published by Józef Czech.

Manufacturers of remedies in their adverts often made reference to well-known doctors.

One of the highly publicized cases in those times was that of Ryszard Brandt who manufactured *Swiss Pills*, popular throughout Europe. In his announcements he would mention people highly respected in the field of medicine, saying: "Tested by Professors and Doctors", and listing names of many renowned professionals, supposedly endorsing the remedy and its effectiveness. In fact, for a fee, some doctors would write opinions about remedies. During a meeting in Stuttgart representatives of printed media decided to initiate "a black book" and record any doctors, who specialized in writing advertising articles (4). Another way to get the "support" of medical community involved placing adverts of secret remedies in specialist medical magazines. It would seem that promotion of secret medicines among doctors was a mistargeted advertising policy. Yet, those placing announcements for instance in "Gazeta Lekarska" would later take advantage of this fact in the so-called "heralded adverts". An advertisement of a fraudulent remedy, placed in a daily paper, would bear a "signature" of "Gazeta



Fig. 7. Advertisement of the St. James drops (Pharmacy Museum, Jagiellonian University)

Lekarska” and that, for readers, was a guarantee for its therapeutic effectiveness (5).

Advertising publications could also take a form of voluminous books with detailed descriptions, “based on scientific evidence”, explaining the treatment method based on the advertised remedy. Manufacturers of remedies and inventors of new treatments would also start their own publications, quite profitable for them. As a rule, first of all such publication would introduce the advertiser to the reader. A portrait of the drug or treatment inventor would be accompanied with information about numerous titles, medals and prizes awarded to him. For instance Adolf Richter, author of “Natural treatment method” was a Knight of Portuguese Convent of Christ and Tunisian Nischan Order, awarded with the

Knight’s Cross of the Republic of San Marino, member of Academic Societies of Paris (Academia Nationale), who provided supplies to the courts of the king and emperor of Austria, and kings of Bavaria, Italy and Portugal, etc. (6). Other illustrations would also depict a factory building or modern chemical equipment of such factory.

At the start the book usually described the circumstances in which the author came up with the idea for the cure or new miracle treatment. The circumstances in almost all cases were identical. Abandoned by doctors and severely ill, the author himself developed a formula which helped him to recover, as a result of which he decided to use his knowledge to save the rest of humanity from suffering. This was followed with a very long and convincing presentation of the theory of diseases

Wyroby lecznicze
PIOTRA KROKIEWICZA Aptekarza
w Krakowie, ul. Basztowa, róg ul. Długiej, Kleparz.

Tym, którzy ciężkie dźwigną brzośnia,
Izują, że barki w pracy się zgarbiły,
Życzą szczerze, by im w głębi łona
Wtrysnął świeży źródł siły!

Do kategorii tej następujące środki lecznicze się zalecają:

Wino ziolowo-rombarbarowe wyborne w zatkaniach, wzdęciach, puchlinie, żółtacze i hemoroidach, reguluje trawienie i przywraca apetyt. Cena 1 złr. 50 ct., wytrawniejsze 4 złr., (1 rsr. 50 kop. i 4 rsr.).

Amigren niezrównany środek w silnym bólu głowy, neuralgii, migrenie. Cena 1 złr. i 1 złr. 50 ct., (1 i 1 rsr. 50 kop.).

Chylol kołi spiesznie cierpienia reumatyczne, artrytyzm, postrzał, podagrę, a stokród lepszy od ekspellerów. Cena 70 ct., 1 złr. i 2 złr., (1 rsr. i 2 rsr.).

Aparat elektrolgalwaniczny przez zaprzyśżone powagi naukowe lekarskie, jak tajny radca v. Góden i Dr Papst uznany za nader skuteczny przeciw zastarzałemu reumatyzmowi, sparaliżowania, równocześnie przytęm używając na zewnątrz Chylol do nacierania, a do picia Sarsaparillan chinowy. Również korzystnym okazał się przeciw blednicy, migrenie, epilepsji, bezsenności, w ogóle przeciw wszelkim chorobom nerwowym. Cena 10 złr. (9 rsr.).

Kropie Leonarda przeciw kurczom i bólowi żołądka, po użyciu których ulga natychmiast następuje. Cena 80 ct. (1 rsr.).

Facina specjalny znakomity lek przeciw blednicy. „Niema już prawdziwe blednicy.” Cena 1 złr. 50 ct. i 3 złr. (3 rsr.).

Callon usuwa odcisk w 24 godzinach bez najmniejszego bólu. Cena 1 złr. (1 rsr.).

Ziółka loretańskie włoskie, przez zakonników reguły św. Franciszka na „Awentynie” (pagórku) zbierane, nieocenione w wszelkich chorobach piersio-nych i płucnych, przeciw kaszłom, dychawicy, astmie, gruźlicy itp. Cena 1 złr. 20 ct. (1 rsr. 50 kop.).

Syrop loretański przy przeciągłych cierpieniach tak płucnych jak i oskrze-łowych, astmie, przytem działa pokrzepiająco, łagodzi cierpienia w zupełności, co w lecznictwie bardzo jest pożądanem. Cena 2 złr. (2 rsr.).

Kropie żołądkowe loretańskie. Po użyciu odpowiedniej ilości ustępują do-łegliwości żołądka i trawienie upośledzone wraca do stanu prawidłowego. Cena jednej flaszeczki 35 ct. (25 kop.).

Sarsaparillan chinowy oczyszcza krew z pierwiastków zakaźnych tak u mężczyzn jak kobiet, działa również korzystnie na wszelkie wypryski i osutki skórne uzdrawiająco. Cena 2 złr., wytrawniejszy 4 złr. (2 rsr., 4 rsr.).

Lorenion, maść cudowna na wszelkie zastarzałe rany, czyraki, wrzody itp. Cena 1 złr., 1 złr. 50 ct. i 2 złr. (1 rsr. i 2 rsr.).



Marka ochronna.

Fig. 8. Advertisement of the products from Piotr Krokiewicz pharmacy (Kalendarz Krakowski, 1889)

and then with recommendations explaining how to apply the remedy or treatment in specific cases. Big part of the book comprised letters to the author from doctors and patients grateful for help.

Manufacturers' packaging materials, company letterheads and labels often presented awards acquired by the product, such as various crosses of merit, gold medals, diplomas from international exhibitions in various European cities. Quite often these were fictitious exhibitions, held annually or only "on paper", or during second-rate fairs, where, for a fee one could persuade the organizers to grant a "diploma", "grand prix" or "gold medal". The highly publicized International General Exhibition in Paris held in 1903, where some apothecaries from Warsaw and Łódź also

received awards, according to a participant "was organized by some labour syndicates in a part of the city which is avoided by civilized people. This was an exhibition, a kind of bazaar, and it was not attended by any major industrialist: in other words everyone in Paris thought it was humbug and it failed to be noticed; even though its opening was announced by posters, no visitors came to see it" (7). The phenomenon of bogus exhibitions and awards business grew in size; some cases in fact ended up in courts of law.

Manufacturers of remedies would lure customers with various lotteries and prizes. One magazine published the following announcement related to a secret bacilli killer: "In view of the risk of cholera, we have good news: it was found that

Anti-bacilline from Mr. Meltzer, the apothecary, effectively destroys not only bacilli of cholera, but also those of tuberculosis, diphtheria, typhus, chickenpox, scarlet fever, measles, etc.; therefore safe protection against these diseases has been achieved, which was ascertained by C. Bischoff, a sworn chemist from Berlin. To make this legally confirmed protection from cholera known to the public, herein a puzzle is announced for prizes... ... There are eight prizes: 1. gold men's watch, 2. gold women's watch, 3. silver men's watch, 4. silver women's watch, 5. nickel men's watch 6. nickel women's watch, 7. silver brooch, 8. aluminium wallet. Please, with each answer, attach 1.50 M. for one flask of Anti-bacilline. Persons who do not answer the puzzle correctly will, for a fee, get a flask of Anti-bacilline, or – at request, rum, arrack or cognac" (8).

In order to encourage patients' faith in the remedy, advertisements frequently made reference to old monastic formulas and miracle remedies were given appropriate names.

So in chemist's shops one could find St. Francis blood purifying pills, Mariacelskie biters, Elixir of the Reverent Benedictine Monks, St. Dominic Liniment, etc. Manufacturers frequently used an image of Virgin Mary as a trademark. Hence, Virgin Mary stood guard to the authenticity of such remedies as Mariacelskie drops, Pain Expeller from Adolf Richter's plant and cures manufactured by Piotr Krokiewicz, an apothecary from Cracow.

Advertising tricks designed to improve sales of "preparations" included names given by manufacturers to their products. Some of these, by design, sounded strange, magical or mysterious, others on the contrary applied familiar and popular concepts. As an example an iron preparation of "an unspecified" doctor Koch was recommended by taking advantage of the well-known name of Robert Koch (1843-1910).

The aggressive, ever-present and largely demagogic advertising resulted in the fact that people, lured with the promise of inevitable recovery, often did not follow doctor's advice, instead opting for self-medication based on recommendations from adverts. Very often advertisements promoted cures for diseases for which medicine at the time did not have effective remedies, such as tuberculosis, neurasthenia and various secret illnesses which patients reported unwillingly, and to avoid doctors they would, by themselves, look for the right cure (9).

The community of pharmacists displayed varied attitudes to advertising. Some apothecaries were fierce opponents, while others used advertising to promote the assortment of foreign medicines on offer in their shops as well as their own preparations. A review of "Kalendarz Krakowski" published by Józef Czech shows that out of a dozen or so chemist's shops existing in Cracow in the 1880s, five had their adverts in the calendar. The greatest uproar was aroused by adverts published by Piotr Krokiewicz who owned Under the Golden Lion Chemist's Shop. Promotion of his remedies in the streets of Cracow, with the use of posters "calculated for a nice penny, 1 metre long and 6 decimetres wide", printed in German, was met with strong criticism published by "Czasopismo Towarzystwa Aptekarskiego" (10). The posters advertised a few remedies produced by Krokiewicz, such as Chylol, Loreto herbs, Leonardo's drops, and "the crowning achievement of these frauds" – Lorenion, i.e. miracle ointment to cure any old wounds, boils, and sores; finally there was a cure for any ailments including syphilis called Chinasarsaparillan.

Similar controversies were aroused by medical advertisements in the community of apothecaries in Warsaw. It was pointed out that the forms used by apothecaries in adverts were inappropriate. Adverts were criticized for such phrases as: "remedies prepared with pedantic...", "under personal supervision", they "value people's health more than anything else", and they "personally bring the finest merchandise to their shop". These advertising slogans are simply confidence tricks aimed at naive customers, because that which the apothecaries were boasting about in the adverts was really part of their duties (11).

Towards the end of the 1800s official measures were initiated to impose restrictions for fraudulent advertising. In many European countries national authorities issued relevant legal acts. Within Austro-Hungarian Empire a Circular Letter issued by the Governing Authorities in 1890 emphasized the importance of drug advertising in compliance with professional ethics of doctors and chemists. Advertising of medicines was allowed only if the description specified their direct, specific effects, e.g. purgative, diaphoretic, diuretic, etc. It was forbidden to include advice related to treatment of ailments as well as "fraudulent praising in order to lure buyers". Political authorities, with the aid of police

supervision over printed media, were to identify brochures, books, prints and announcements in which advertisements of pharmaceuticals were not designed to inform patients about the actual properties of the relevant remedy but were aimed at increasing profit from sales of such product by its manufacturer. Ministry of Justice imposed an obligation on prosecutor's offices to investigate any cases of dubious or prohibited distribution of prints violating the regulation and carrying advertisements of supposedly healing products (12).

Similar laws were in force in the part of Poland under Russian authority. In accordance with Medical Act of 1886 (§ 309) any announcements related to sales of medicines, printed in papers and on separate advertising materials were to be accepted for printing after they were reviewed and approved by relevant governing medical authorities. Communications of the General Board of Printed Media and Medical Department, published in 1868-1888 as a result of decisions issued by the Medical Council, included regulations pertaining to medical advertisements. Despite these legal restrictions, newspapers contained large numbers of announcements related to remedies illegally brought from abroad to Russia where their sales were prohibited. Such adverts, as it was commented: "evoked the desire in the public to buy such forbidden remedies and this way forced apothecaries and materialists to import these in secret". In printed media one could also encounter adverts of medicinal products approved for import into the Empire, but these largely contained traits of charlatanism, since they were spiced up with numerous, undeserved praises, lists of diseases which could be successfully treated with these remedies, and supplemented with various evidence of their effectiveness. To finally clarify all matters related to advertisement of medicines, Communications of the Medical Department were issued in 1890 and clearly defined the rules for publishing medical advertisements. Manufacturers of medicines and entities involved in trade of medicines were required to place the original advertising announcement for a medicinal product in the governmental journal "Prawitjelstwiennyi Wiestnik", in a form approved by the relevant authorities. Such announcements could then be reprinted, in the same form, in other publications. The advertising entity was required to send the relevant issue of "Prawitjelstwiennyi Wiestnik" or provide its reference number to editorial office

of the paper, or to the printing shop or lithographic studio. The local medical board was responsible for the censorship of announcements and for verifying whether the adverts published locally were in compliance with the original version and whether their form did not differ from the approved original announcement (13).

Resumo

Farmacia varbado estas la plej rapide kreskanta parto de la varbindustrio, gvidanta al troa konsumado de senpriskribe aĉetebblaj kuraciloj. Rerigardante al la 19-a jarcento ni rimarkas, ke varbananancoj akompanis farmaciajn industrion ekde la komenco. Farmaciaj firmaoj varbis por kuraciloj, sed varbado ĉefe estis la kampo de tiuj, kiuj produktis "miraklajn kuracilojn" kaj promesis kompletan kuracon. Informoj pri medikamentoj troviĝis sur kalendaroj, ludkartoj, libroj por elpentr, tabulludoj, afiŝoj kaj ludiloj. Aperis vasta literaturo, ĉefe en la formo de faldfolioj, libretoj kaj broŝuroj de diversaj specoj, helpe de kiuj malsanulo povis eklerni, kiel la kuracilo efikas, kontraŭ kiuj malsanoj ĝi helpis, kaj, plej grave, kie ĝi estis aĉetebla.

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