

## Section on Commercial Interests

Papers Presented at the Sixtieth Annual Convention

### THE PERSONAL ELEMENT IN ADVERTISING.

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A member of your Commercial Section asked me to write a paper for his section. I told him I would if he would assign me a subject.

This he promptly did, and it was something about advertising. "Can the retail drug store compete with big stores in the advertising field" I think was his suggestion. I pondered the subject for many days. One day the answer was "Yes," but the next day it would be "No" just as emphatically; so I finally gave it up, and came to the conclusion that the right answer was twins.

The answer is yes, because some retail druggists compete very successfully with the big stores in the advertising field, and the answer is no because many druggists have tried this sort of competition and failed to make good.

For a druggist located in the suburb of a city to use the daily papers is, of course, out of the question for he would be compelled to publish his advertisements in a circulation that covers a large community and he could hope to effect only a small proportion of this community. If he is located where a majority of the readers may conveniently reach him, then there is no reason why he could not successfully bid for the business.

The druggist in a small town or in a local neighborhood cannot employ the same methods, either in advertising or conducting his business, as do the large stores, any more than the owner of one or two tenement houses may supply light and heat and janitor service as offered by the large apartment house owner. The methods of the large store are not the methods of the small one, but there are many good ways of advertising a small store that may be just as successful in proportion as those used by the large competitors.

It is up to the druggist to find out how he can advertise. I tried many methods before I finally struck my gait, and the plan I used might not work out under other circumstances. I published circulars describing my specialties in more or less glowing language; I got out price lists and talks on prescriptions. Sometimes my friends would tell me my efforts were good advertising, but I never could see that they produced results in the way of more business. After several years of effort in the field I one day wrote an ad. for my little four-page store paper, which opened up like this: "This little paper is sent out to tell the people about my drug store." That was the only inspiration I think I ever had. It wasn't much but I used it for all it was worth. Here is the way I reasoned to myself, now folks will say, "You say you are going to tell us about your drug store, now go to it." And I did go to it. I began to use the personal pronoun, and talked in my advertise-

ments just as I talked to people over my counter. There is nothing in the world more interesting than personal experience. People would rather hear you talk about yourself than anything else—if you tell the truth. They will read your advertisements about your business—your business—not the drug business in glittering generality—but your business—if you give it to them straight and tell the truth. From the time I began to really and truly “tell about my drug store” I could count results in cash. There are thousands of interesting things about the goods in a drug store, and the story of the druggist himself when told on the printed page or by word of mouth will be absorbed with avidity, provided always that it is the druggist’s own story.

There was a book published recently by Mary Antin called “The Promised Land.” The book contains no romance, no history, no tragedy. It is the simple story of Mary Antin and it is all true. You will read every line of it and read lots of it twice, simply because it is the true story of a human being. Put yourself into your ads. and they will bring results; the more you tell about yourself the more people will like you.

Every druggist can advertise. Not necessarily like some other fellow does it. He must do some experimental work and find out where he is strong. It may be window displays. There is surely room at the top in that field. It may be at the soda fountain. There are plenty of chances for improving soda fountain drinks and methods. It may be in the keeping of a neat store, and here, too, there is much chance for betterment.

It may be in the publishing of a small periodical, as in my own case. My paper never contained any article that will be quoted in the Encyclopedia; it was not a brilliant example of grammatical excellence; but it was a good advertisement for my drug store because it was ME from beginning to end, and I was a good druggist, that point, of course, was always kept to the fore. I was no better, understand, than many others right around me, but I got more business than they did because I kept telling the people what a good druggist I was.

Many druggists say they cannot write an ad. Any druggist can write a better ad. himself than any one else can write for him.

Put this in your pipe and smoke it—if you have a drug store that is worth patronizing you CAN tell the people around you about it if you want to—and want to hard enough.

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### CAPITALIZING INDIVIDUALITY.

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HUGH CRAIG, NEW YORK.

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Individuality, like the artistic temperament, manifests itself in a wondrous variety of forms. But, unlike the other, individuality is common to all of us. True, it has been subdued in many by that tendency toward unity, cooperation, mass plays, so marked in the social economy of the present day. On the other hand, it has been cultivated by those who have turned to specialization, recognizing that