

you keep a complete line of chemicals and reagents will bring to your store students, amateur and professional photographers and physicians for their supplies and other goods.

*Conclusion:* The subject of window displays is most certainly an important one. In fact one of our bright pharmaceutical editors has even written a book, "Window Displays for Druggists," of which two editions have so far been published.

I trust that my suggestions for pharmaceutical window displays will be somewhat considered and will have the desired effect, namely, that more displays will be made pertaining to pharmacy, displays which will gain the confidence of the public and the physicians, and which will be a credit to the profession of pharmacy.

#### DISCUSSION.

MR. FORD: "It is refreshing to hear of the many things that we can put in our windows. I think about the nicest window display I have seen is the one represented in the hall outside, consisting of native medicinal plants. Especially effective as window ornaments are drug plants, concerning which the public has more or less information, as the Conium plant with which Socrates destroyed his life, or the Henbane plant, the juice of which was injected into the ear of Hamlet's father. A good window display can also be made from U. S. P. and N. F. preparations. We had one at Denver a while ago consisting of the best looking preparations put up in good style in gallon bottles. Such a display commands the attention of both physicians and the laity.

"Anything which has life or possesses motion is effective as a window display, such as revolving mechanical devices, etc.

"I have had a good many window displays along the lines indicated by Mr. Raubenheimer. One of the most effective consisted of the slow dropping of a potassium iodide solution into a solution of mercuric chloride. Each drop as it strikes the chloride solution becomes pink, then red, and falls to the bottom in a red layer, leaving a colorless solution above."

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#### SIMPLIFIED METHODS OF RECORDING CHARGE SALES.

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AMBROSE HUNSBERGER.

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This brief communication is offered without pretense of embodying entirely new suggestions, or of outlining hitherto unknown methods of handling the problem of charge sales, but rather with the idea that its presentation might encourage an interchange of individual views and experiences from which a "composite" impression could be made which would more nearly present the ideal method of entering charge sales unfliningly, quickly and accurately.

Two classes of stores may be eliminated as having no vital interest in this topic: the one class being made up of the very small drug stores having few or no charge transactions, while the other embraces the very large stores—more or less of the "department" type—in which systematic records of both cash and credit sales are conveniently taken care of by assistants, whose duties and qualifications are purely clerical.

The class which is most vitally concerned in this problem consists of what might be termed the average drug stores, and includes approximately eighty per cent of the establishments devoted to the practice of retail pharmacy.

In this latter class of stores the duties devolving upon the assistants are necessarily diversified in character, partly because of the variety of lines handled and partly on account of the long business hours, which necessitate working in "shifts" and requires a constant rearrangement of the duties to be performed. This rearrangement of duties brings about a certain amount of divided responsibility because of the resulting uncompleted transactions, and it soon develops the tendency among the members of an establishment to depend upon "the other fellow" to complete the charge sale, with the inevitable result that no one attends to this important part of the transaction. This point is well illustrated by the old phrase which tells us that "that which is everybody's business is nobody's business."

There is little trouble, of course, with credit sales which are handled individually and completely, and in close proximity to the daily charge sheet, or the cash register, where but a step and a few pencil strokes are necessary to complete the record. The trouble arises when you are out front, remote from register or charge-pad, possibly serving a charge customer, when your busy modern American citizen comes flying in through the door and breathlessly requests a dollar roll of adhesive plaster, which you courteously hand to him from a nearby shelf, and he disappears as rapidly as he came with the injunction to "charge it." You are about to make a note of the transaction, but are met at the half-way point by a junior assistant with a request for information regarding a rush order which he is packing up, and after disposing of him you apologetically return to your waiting customer, having decided to enter up the adhesive plaster sale along with the charge sale before you. When finally the uninterrupted sequence of drug store events has enabled you to get in touch with your charging system you have probably lost all recollection of the man in a hurry for a roll of adhesive plaster.

While such occurrences are not the rule, yet there are a sufficient number during a year's work in a reasonably busy store to warrant the assumption that the net profits would be increased materially by their total elimination.

It is probably true that in many stores the active proprietor is the chief culprit. His desire to avoid the appearance of unnecessarily detaining a charge customer occasionally prompts him to allow the purchaser of numerous articles to depart before making a complete record and in entering the charge subsequently important items are overlooked, or with proper gallantry he escorts Mrs. Jones to the door, only to meet Mrs. Brown coming in with an order requiring immediate attention, and the first transaction is forgotten, or perhaps only in part recalled to memory. Another illustration is that of your friend, the doctor, with whom you discuss at length a topic you've had in mind for some time and when he finally departs you have probably managed to overlook the fact that the doctor bought a two dollar hypodermic syringe on credit just before you began to unlimber your eloquence.

The proper control of packages sent out by messenger, express or post also presents some difficulties, particularly in stores where the amount of this business falls just below the volume that would warrant the organization of a department having this work in charge.

Taking into consideration, then, that in the average drug store the organization of departments, properly manned, and built out from a common center (cashier or bookkeeper) is precluded because of the kaleidoscopic character of the trans-

actions requiring trained assistants with shifting hours of duty, it will be seen that the establishing of a system of properly controlling credit sales is no simple problem, and if not given the deserved consideration may seriously menace the success of a business.

The successful operation of methods of control must involve anticipation of the cooperation of our patrons. It is a generally accepted fact that the same patron who cheerfully passes twenty minutes in a department store awaiting completion of a transaction involving the purchase of a paper of pins will turn a drug store inside out if detained over ten minutes by the preparation of a prescription which may involve the handling of violent poisons and require the utmost skill in the manipulation. And how does he explain his calm attitude toward the pin transaction—"Oh, that's their system. You couldn't run a department store without a system." A logical conclusion, of course, but did his own sense of reasoning lead him to it? Why, no, the department store simply established the system, enforced it, and the pin customer is so well used to it that he almost deludes himself with the idea that it was his own suggestion. And why does he fail to recognize the need for system in the drug store, of all places? Probably because his experience has taught him to believe that the department store would rather lose the sale than fail to enter the charge, while the druggist would rather fail to enter the charge than lose the sale.

It must be understood that this attitude is not assumed by the great majority of our charge customers, but applies to isolated cases such as any of you can probably call to mind; and it is those cases that we are dealing with—it is usually the isolated, the odd, the unexpected credit transaction that we forget to record. Impatience with our system on the part of the patron must be overcome by a judicious display of tact and diplomacy, the needs of our patrons must be supplied courteously, intelligently, and with dispatch, and then without undue delay or ostentation, but with firm insistence for a complete record of charge purchases.

While perhaps not the best method extant the scheme of carrying paper pads has been found to work fairly well. An important part of this system is involved in carrying the pad in one's pocket—a promiscuous distribution of pads about the establishment and a wild scramble for one when an entry is to be made is neither dignified nor helpful. They should be distributed among the members and their invariable use for the purposes indicated insisted upon. The fair success of this method may be attributed to the fact that it places the facilities for recording credit transactions immediately under one's hand at all times, and may be adapted to cover only the remote parts of an establishment, or to include all transactions within the place of business. The ultimate disposition of the slips is governed by the next step in the credit system—the bookkeeping. If it be desirable to preserve the original entries the slips may be placed in envelopes properly dated, and filed away.

The use of blank sheets in these pads is not desirable, for several reasons, the chief ones being the lack of symmetry in the placing of names and items, which makes the work of transferring more difficult; the more impressive appearance of a printed sheet in the eyes of the patron; and the further fact that a little ingenuity exercised in wording the printing makes the sheet do double and even triple duty, in that it may be made to serve as an emergency order blank, a charge slip,

and an identity slip that stays with the prescription until its final delivery to the proper party. The wording on such a sheet would include blank spaces for name, address and date; method of delivery is indicated by a pencil-tick following the abbreviations "Mess.," "Post," "Ex.," "Call." Charges are indicated likewise after "C. O. D. Chg. Pd.," and the identity of all concerned in the transaction is indicated by "Ord' by..... R'c'd by..... Del'd by..... The time to be delivered is stated after "When".....

When this slip is used to enter a charge it is filled out in the usual manner, "Chg." is ticked and "del'd" placed after "When." If used for the other purposes indicated it goes through the usual routine, after which it is placed on the charge file or filed with "Orders filled." It can also be made to serve the purpose of a charge against the messenger who takes C. O. D. deliveries. If desirable these may of course be used in duplicate with the aid of carbon paper.

The commendable points of this method are its simplicity, accuracy, but it won't do to say it's infallibility, because just at that point the personal equation steps in. However, this communication may bring out the infallible method, since the spirit of scientific management is in the air, and there is no one more deserving of discovering that method nor better entitled to its use than the retail pharmacist.

#### DISCUSSION.

MR. GUILFORD: "These talks on bookkeeping and proper management of drug stores have certainly appealed to me. I conduct two large stores and they have been made successful through system, through bookkeeping and strict accounting for cash received. I have in my two stores the best cash system that I have seen in any drug store and I have been in a great many. I especially believe in system and think it is impossible for a man to succeed in business without system. He must know what his profits are, and these can be ascertained only through a thorough system of bookkeeping."

MR. DAVID STOLZ: "I came here to learn something and have gotten hold of some good things, especially the "credit system" of the paper just read. At our store there is a large amount of telephone business, and consequently a number of charge accounts. We have one of those machines in which there are three rolls of paper. The top one is the original, which we put into the customer's package; the blue one we give to the delivery boy, and it is signed by the customer when the package is delivered. It always bears the name of the party, and at the end of the month if the customer claims he did not receive the order the matter can be traced. If there is nobody at home, the boy writes on the slip, "Left at the front door or rear door," etc. If the package is sent by special messenger, it is indicated what messenger service delivered it.

"Regarding Mr. Cook's paper, which I enjoyed very much. He gave a lot of different items under which things should be charged in the store accounts. That looks very good, but where you have a store and employ a bookkeeper and have many large charge accounts to your customers your bookkeeper has all she can do to itemize these accounts. I do not see why you should have so many accounts, as Freight, Drayage, Clerk Hire, expense of this and expense of that all under different items."

MR. HYNSON: "It is simply a question of information. If you do not want that information, don't keep these accounts. The whole idea of keeping accounts is to see how much you are spending for freight or one thing or another, and to give you information about your business."