

EDITORIAL

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"CRAM" COURSES IN PHARMACY AND PREREQUISITE REQUIREMENTS.

SEVERAL years ago a special committee of the American Conference of Pharmaceutical Faculties found that there were about twenty-five institutions giving "cram" courses in pharmacy. So far as it is possible to determine there are nearly as many to-day but some of them have a much reduced enrollment and it is evident from their advertising matter that most of them see that their days are numbered. Consequently they are making a strong bid for students *now*. They are directing attention to the fact that the legislatures are passing prerequisite laws which debar any but college graduates from examinations and are urging those who wish to become pharmacists to take these plugging courses immediately. They say also that examinations cover more subjects and are more difficult.

Besides this placing of greater emphasis on the necessity of enrolling quickly their literature is not much changed. Just a few things have come to light that invite comment.

An institution in an eastern city which conducts quiz (spelled quizz) classes and correspondence classes advertises its own quiz books as the "best buy any Drug Clerk can make," quoting in this connection from the letter of a purchaser in a near-by state, "I have passed my State Board requirements. Every question that was asked on the recent examination, I found in your books." We may not all reach the same conclusions but certainly no board member who is at all interested in the administration of his office wants to think that it is possible for people to memorize the answers to all the questions in a quiz-compend and thereby get registered.

With perhaps one exception these so-called schools (most of them are one-man or one-woman affairs) make no claim other than that of preparing people to pass Board examinations. One, however, gives degrees, as many as, possibly more than, any reputable college in the country. Pay your money and take your choice, Ph.G., Ph.C., Pharm.B., Pharm.D. To get the Ph.G. degree, it is necessary to become a registered pharmacist after taking their correspondence course, and to present a thesis of five thousand words. The requirements for Pharm. B. and Ph.C. are the same as for Ph.G. with a high school diploma and two years in college additional. "To be eligible for the Doctor of Pharmacy degree the candidate must prove that he or she is either a Registered Pharmacist or is a graduate of a College of Pharmacy and has a Ph.G. degree (Registered Pharmacists not college graduates will be required to take two examinations, the first leading

to the Ph.G. degree and second leading to the Pharm.D. degree)." So much for eligibility. "The course," the circular says, "will consist of ten large lessons forwarded to the student by mail. The student will receive one lesson at a time, the lessons being sent at various intervals during a period of nine months." Think of it! You may take this "cram" course and having passed a Board examination take more correspondence work and become a Doctor of Pharmacy without ever having stepped inside of a real college of pharmacy. Why not? The course is "under the supervision of capable professors, who were formerly connected with various pharmaceutical institutions and colleges." A later communication conveys the information that users of the Pharm.D. degree, in a certain state, need not fear prosecution and others need not be deterred from taking the course, because a satisfactory agreement has been reached with the authorities whereby the holder need only attach, in parenthesis after the degree, the name of the state where the institution is located, to show in what state it is chartered. Then follows this statement: "The addition of such description is so general that our representatives felt these suggestions were very satisfactory and willingly agreed to advise our graduates to adopt them. Graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Yale, Harvard and similar institutions frequently do this in order to establish the value of the degree and we believe the same custom on the part of our graduates will redound to the credit of the University and the individual."

Texts for several sermons could easily be selected from these quotations to say nothing about what can be read between the lines but both are so obvious that any comment seems almost superfluous. In the face of these facts it passes comprehension that there can be opposition to prerequisite legislation. With the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy pledged to require two years of college work in 1923 and these "cram" schools urging people to enroll now, the time intervening is bound to mean one grand rush to "get registered" before it is too late and the states without prerequisite laws will become the dumping ground of incompetents from other states.

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