

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF PHARMACEUTICAL FACULTIES

THE REAL OBJECTIONS TO THE THREE-DAY-A-WEEK PLAN.*

BY EDWARD SPEASE.¹

The three-day-a week plan of education in schools of pharmacy is a hybrid—new ideas of education grafted on the old apprentice system. The apprentice system gasped its last after a long, unequal struggle with the trend of modern business to rush, bustle, and efficiency. The modern proprietor has not time to give his clerks the painstaking instruction and training and to instil in them the pride of craft that was formerly given to apprentices. And so this failure of the apprentice system, together with the demand for more exact knowledge, brought about the hybrid growth of the work and school every-other-day plan. It is to the advantage of the retail druggist because it gives him cheap help that is fairly likely to stay with him for at least two years.

In the ordinary, medium-sized drug store a man must be able to sell goods as well as to handle drugs and fill prescriptions. Therefore the demand that pharmacists shall have had retail store experience. But is this plan the ideal way to get experience? Our school, like many others, discontinued the every-other-day plan of school several years ago, because we are convinced that it is not the best we can offer to future pharmacists, for the following reasons:

With the general raising of standards of education and the growing demand that a man "know his stuff," three days a week for two years is not nearly long enough to educate a pharmacist. Indeed, we have found two full years, with school every day in the week, too crowded, and we shall be glad when the time comes to go to the three-year course as a minimum, as it will enable us to come closer to giving the student the proper training. Of course four years—a regular college course—would be better. Instead of short quiz courses to give the student just enough to pass the Board we are trying to give him real courses of regular university length and grade, that will furnish him a firm understanding and sure basis for whatever work he wishes to do. It is not possible to do this when school is in session only every other day.

Some schools will raise the counter argument, "We give our students as many actual hours of school work in three days as you give in five and a half." Here at Western Reserve University our students in pharmacy average 28 actual hours of lecture, quiz and laboratory a week. Crowded into three days this would mean more than nine actual hours a day. Pedagogically this is unsound. Psychology shows that there is a fatigue point beyond which the mind does not assimilate knowledge or function efficiently. If the steel mills have come down to the eight-hour day for manual labor, surely we cannot expect a man to do continuous mental work for more than that.

A second objection to this plan is that the attention and interest of the student are too much divided. In the first place he usually works the night before school,

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and so has no time to study. A day or more elapses between his classes and, busy with the store routine, he has forgotten—lost the thread of his studies. When he comes back to school he loses time getting into the spirit of things collecting his wits and finding out what he is doing. It is like having the Monday morning after vacation every day. And again, if the student gets behind with his laboratory work, for example, there is no time to slip in an extra hour or two, as the other days belong to his drug store job.

The chief argument for the system, of course, is that it gives the student the drug store experience that he needs while he is going to school. That argument presupposes that all drug store experience is of value to the future pharmacist, and of course we all know that this is not true. If we could only pick the store that each man should work in and impress upon the proprietor or the man in charge his duty toward his clerks, we could be sure of the value of drug store experience, but too many men are just looking for the cheap help above mentioned.

The state of Virginia has done away with all drug store experience whatsoever as prerequisite for registration. It says to the school of pharmacy, "the entire responsibility rests with you to make pharmacists." Our plan here in Cleveland has been somewhat different. We are giving each student internship work in the hospital pharmacies and dispensaries. This impresses him particularly with his primary function as a pharmacist and gives him training in this function, applied directly to the patient. We do, however, recognize the value of the proper kind of retail experience, and we find that we can go farther with a man who has had such experience. Ultimately we may extend this internship in the case of students who have not had actual retail experience to placing them in carefully selected drug stores, supervising their work so that they may obtain the greatest possible good from it. Such work will supplement, however, and not take the place of the regular school work.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH.

RESEARCH INFORMATION* (APRIL, 1924).

A census of the research work now being performed by instructors and students of American colleges of pharmacy, either as candidates for higher degrees or as research fellows, brings out the fact that 29 persons have been so engaged during the current year. A tabulated list of these pharmaceutical research workers follows:

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF PHARMACY.	H. C. Kassner, B.S.
C. W. Ballard, M.A., Phar.D., Candidate for Ph.D., Columbia Univ.—	(Plaut Fellow N. Y. C. P.)
Pharmacology of the genus <i>Erythroxylon</i> .	Ph.D. Univ. London, November, 1923—
	Histological and chemical examination of the seeds of <i>Ipomæa hederacea</i> .
W. J. Bonisteel, B.S., Candidate for M.S., Columbia Univ.—	Hugo H. Schaefer, Phar.D.
Pharmacognosy of Colombia cinchonas.	Candidate for Ph.D., Univ. Berne—
	Wax acids and coloring matter of stick lac.

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