

EDITORIAL

E. G. EBERLE, EDITOR

10 West Chase St., BALTIMORE, MD.

THE PASSING AND THE COMING YEAR.

A CROSS-WORD optimist (in 1924) looking forward to 1925 predicted that the year would be a successful one, because one plus nine times two times five signified 100 per cent—a full measure of success. Relative to 1928 it may be said that one plus nine times two plus eight equals one hundred, or, if confronted by one not so full of enthusiasm, that the first two numerals are odd and the other two are even numbers; thus, the good and evil will, at least, balance.

In looking forward to the opportunities of pharmacy and the drug business we must also look backward not only within the limited sphere of these activities but, because of the many-sidedness, outward by way of the points of contact with other activities in order to apply right principles to effect right relations.

The problems of pharmacy to-day are in some respects different from those of the preceding period—new conditions confront us and new emergencies surround our paths; although pharmacy itself is not open to the general competition which obtains in the drug business as a whole, there are problems which require the constant attention and study of pharmacists and particularly of Board members—some of these can be solved by establishing greater uniformity in laws or regulations wherein all States are concerned; for example, handling of questions arising in reciprocal registration—these probably present no great difficulties and can be corrected by careful study of situations as they arise. The same thought applies to State laws that are found defective—these should be revised in such particulars as promptly as possible; they are in effect like weak places in a levee.

The matter of closer supervision over drug stores is not so easily taken care of, because large expenses are involved, but ways and means should be devised whereby closer supervision may be had so that the conduct of stores, in conflict with laws or regulations, may be corrected. In some instances non-compliance with laws is followed by serious consequences; during the past year a number of poisoning cases have been due to the handling of drugs and compounding of prescriptions by others than pharmacists. The owners of the stores wherein there has been violation of the law, through thoughtlessness or otherwise, find themselves, because of that fact, in a serious situation.

Aside from what is probably the most serious effect there is also contributory injustices to law-abiding competitors and qualified pharmacists who are seeking employment. See "Department N. A. B. P.," this issue—Colorado State Board, Oregon; Aspirin decisions; Arizona and Utah items in October JOURNAL, pp. 957 and 958.

Judge Myron Westover, of the Los Angeles municipal court, recently rendered a decision holding that—"so long as no drugs are sold, compounded or dispensed; so long as no medicines are sold, compounded or dispensed—a drug store may sell any other article of merchandise without the presence of a registered pharmacist."

One reason for the reference made is to point out the need of uniform pharmacy laws and the necessity for correcting defects in laws; decisions in one State may affect the laws of other States.

Pharmacy is the foundation of the drug business, hence, it is of paramount importance that its status be well guarded; also, it is generally recognized as necessary for the average store to increase the sales volume through merchandizing in order to render pharmaceutical service to the public, which in many stores would be impossible otherwise. It should also be said that, so long as pharmacy receives the careful attention which is essential to its proper conduct, the limit, great or small, is a matter for the owner to decide; however, the increasing volume and variety of merchandise in stores and the sales of articles that are very different from those that in the past were denominated drug-store merchandise brings about a situation wherein pharmacy is sometimes near the vanishing point and, therefore, constitutes a problem deserving of careful study. This condition does not obtain to the extent some would have us believe; as indicated—in case of those who give due consideration to pharmacy, no matter how small a part it may be of the business—it constitutes a valuable service; but when the sole purpose is to seek the advantages gained through the pharmacy as a minor adjunct, and the sales volume of other items the aim, then the situation may be different. Good business management and honest merchandizing are essentials in drug-store conduct and share equally in importance with its professional side.

Part of the foregoing has been prompted by a comment on a recent article in *Printers Ink* entitled "The Vanishing Pharmacist," a paragraph of the comment is quoted, but it is regretted that we cannot, at this time, locate the editorial and give due credit to the publication from which the following was copied:

"We give space to the foregoing (the article in *Printers Ink*) in order to point a moral as well as adorn a tale. It is time that druggists were waking up to the need of propaganda in their own interests. To the need of widely informing the public of the truth of the matter. To the need of taking the professional light out from under the bushel under which it has been hidden. These things are imperative unless we are willing to accept the vanishing pharmacist concept of the drug business, which most of us are not."

Although the great problems confronting us to-day in pharmacy and the drug business differ, they are as vital and important to their progress as were the questions which prompted the organization of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION; their solution is largely dependent on our vision and understanding—let us fully realize our part in the work. The shaping of these activities, as has been said before in these columns, is not only responsive to our energies and ideals, but to how we impress the public with our coöperative efforts. There is no influence more potent and helpful than that of business and professional men banded together for the purpose of promoting the general welfare of pharmacy and the drug business when the paramount thought is service.

May 1928 measure up to 100 per cent of our hopes and expectations.—E. G. E.
