

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.\*

BY VICTOR NOREEN.

The average drug store is still occupied with the dual activity of professional practice and trade. In some stores the one or the other activity is ascending and the other declining. There is a see-sawing going on and indecision on the part of proprietors whether to continue the present two-fold activity or to choose the one other for exclusive occupation. The trend toward separation has unquestionably accelerated during the last five years as evidence on the one hand by the increasing numbers of purely professional pharmaceutical stores or laboratories, and on the other by the over-commercialization of many stores to the point of almost or complete extinction of pharmaceutical practice. These signs are on the whole good and promise better things for pharmacy in due time.

Until recently the overcommercialized store enjoyed, in a large measure, the prestige attached to pharmacy. However, many of these are now losing pharmaceutical patronage because their establishments are representing, increasingly, the interests of commerce rather than of pharmacy, and because the public is finding this out and buys less and less of its pharmaceutical supplies at such stores. Reciprocally, the purely professional stores and those who make or who endeavor to make their establishments preponderantly professional are reaping the advantages of the old pharmaceutical prestige. Their business in pharmaceutical respects is naturally growing at the expense of the stores which are losing their pharmaceutical business because they are depriving their establishments of the pharmaceutical or professional atmosphere and supplanting it with the commercial.

All this is prefatory to the statement that the public gets what it wants and gets it under the most favorable circumstances. The public is realizing, in a very increasing measure, that it can get usually a much better professional service from the pharmacist who devotes all or the larger portion of his time to pharmaceutical practice.

This leads to the next observation, namely, that some establishments which are pharmaceutical in only a negligible degree, continue to sail under the colors of pharmacy as though they were real pharmacies. It is no doubt still true that they attract customers because of their adherence to pharmacy though in a greatly attenuated degree. If these establishments recognize the value of pharmaceutical prestige, how much more alert to this advantage should those stores be which are much less commercial. For example: I know of a store that still does a 60% pharmaceutical business but the appearance in the make-up of the store would hardly lead anyone to suppose this to be the case. Everything in sight of the customer creates the atmosphere of a general store rather than of a drug store. The prescription department and the good-sized laboratory for the making of many preparations are cut off by a partition which obstructs any view that might remind one of a drug store. It so happens that this store is owned and operated by a pharmacist who through long years has established himself in the confidence of many patrons. It is certain that should he remove himself from the business, there would be left only the 40% of trade now carried on in the store. If this business would emphasize its pharmaceutical aspect rather than its commercial, there is little doubt but that it would do as much commercial business as at present and much more in the pharmaceutical lines.

I, therefore, stress professional standards upon a greater number of drug stores. The letting-go or minimizing of professional standards is not only detrimental to this ancient and honored profession of ours as a whole, but militates directly against the material prosperity of individual pharmacists.

I am happy to report that this viewpoint is gaining ground everywhere and that it is conducive, in a measure at least, to better things for pharmacy.

It is taken for granted that all members of this Association know what is meant by professional standards, and so I think it unwise to take up time in defining what professional and ethical standards mean.

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\* Read at the Joint Meeting of the Northwestern Branch A. Ph. A. and the Scientific and Practical Section, M. S. P. A.