
PHARMACY AND THE PROFESSIONAL SPIRIT.*¹

(ABSTRACT.)

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"I remember climbing up a hill, behind the city of Marseille. First of all I climbed a certain distance, and could then see just over the tops of the houses; a little further on I could see the city streets, and going higher up still, the docks and the great steamers. The whole city and the wide horizon beyond could then be seen. It would indeed be useful if we could stand aside and view the anxieties of impending examinations, and the difficulties of business, in some such way; if we could view the profession you represent, and the part which you yourselves wish to play in it, in the light of a wider horizon, and with a truer sense of perspective.

"I have been endeavoring to get to know from the trade journals more about pharmacists. One thing is very evident to me—that you are expected by those who speak for pharmacy to cherish your profession as something which is honored by the community, and is also efficient and well-organized, in its corporate life. Professions, however, carry with them certain implications. Those who enter into a profession should be well qualified in mind and character in the work they are about to undertake. Membership of a profession usually involves membership of a Society, and that Society requires from its members loyalty to its principles and loyalty to the body which acts in its interests as a whole. Every member must regard the profession as holding a trust on the part of the public.

"It is quite evident, I think, that those of you who are going to take part in the work of the Pharmaceutical Society will have to decide among yourselves such matters of principle as *first*, the limits of individual liberty, *secondly*, the degree of responsibility of the corporate body, *thirdly*, the place of local initiative, and finally, the extent and degree of central control. Members of your Society are having to face the difficulties and problems which confront thoughtful men in this modern world in many phases of life, and it is to be hoped that they can be solved in such a way as to continue to claim the loyal and whole-hearted support of the members.

"Professions further imply the principle of public service. If we think of the men who have devoted themselves in disinterested service to the Church, law, civil service and other professions, we can realize what modern civilization owes to them. The educated man is not supposed to work directly or indirectly for his own enrichment or for his own honor and glory. He belongs to, and has made himself over to our order consecrated to ends transcending any such personal considerations. This is the high standard to which pharmacists must seek to attain in the difficult work they do. To be perfectly frank, however, I think you have a more than usually difficult task, for after all, pharmacists are often traders as well as professional men. The ethics of advertising is also open to criticism, appealing, as it so often does, on the one hand to the vanity of people and on the other to the fears they have of, as for example, illness or personal embarrassment. I mention this as a challenge implicit in your own ideals, for I firmly believe that the honor of your profession is high, and that your knowledge and integrity are rightly trusted by the public.

"Finally I would speak to the students. It is to be expected that you should have before you, here and in the future, the aim of success. What you have to decide when you set about the aim, is the way you are going to achieve it. Perhaps the surest way is to keep before you what can be truly called professional pride. The test of success in any walk of life is not measured alone in the material rewards which life brings us, but is the self-respect that comes to us in doing our work efficiently and well, and in the consciousness that we are keeping alive the best traditions of our race. And not the least of the traditions to which you are committed by your entry into this profession of pharmacy is that of true and faithful service and work for the public good."

* From the *Chemist and Druggist*, October 27, 1934, page 516.

¹ From an address to the students of the Department of Pharmacy of Leicester College of Technology on the occasion of awarding prizes to successful students, at a joint meeting with Leicestershire Branch of the British Pharmaceutical Society.

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