

HOW CAN THE COLLEGES BETTER EQUIP THEIR STUDENTS FOR BUSINESS.*

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It is not because I have anything new or unusual to present upon this subject that I am led to offer this paper; it is prepared simply to comply with the polite request of the chairman, Mr. Thiesing, hoping it will, at least, help to fill up his program.

The era is upon us, I believe, when only experts and severely and especially trained leaders should presume to take up the time of conventions; so very valuable, so very helpful, may these "gathering together" occasions be made. More than ever before do I feel the responsibility resting upon those who undertake to instruct their fellows.

Were I to directly and concisely answer the question that has been given me by the Chairman—the caption of my paper—I would submit the following:

"By equipping them to efficiently render the actual service they will be called upon to render humanity through their customers, while securing for themselves a reasonable competency with protection against unproductive old age."

Students certainly will not be encouraged to become equipped for their life's work if the colleges, through their faculties, deride, disparage, or condemn the business into which the students are about to enter. It will not do to tell them of the "departed glories" of pharmacy and present the "degradations" into which it has descended.

It may be fearlessly concluded that those who discredit any honest vocation are persons who are not thoroughly—through and through—acquainted with the worth and possibilities of that vocation. It follows, then, that those who would better equip students for "business" should themselves become better acquainted with the real scope of business, with the modern effective methods of business, and with the real science of business.

To better equip students for "business," the colleges must actually know the business; knowing well any small part of it will not do. It is pathetic to contemplate the narrow specialist in pharmacy, holding the idea that his attainments make up the sum-total of pharmaceutical excellence. A fairly good pharmaceutical "Jack of all trades" may have many highly self-enjoyed half hours made possible by the absence of touch with actualities by an arrogant specialist. "There is glory enough for all." Yes, but the glory of all is so wonderfully much more than the glory of any one particular phase of pharmacy. The whole is so broad and so comprehensive as to make it almost beyond comprehension.

All this is an effort to make it appear that the colleges should, in the beginning, encourage and stimulate students to become interested in the more practical features of pharmaceutical practice, and that they should strive to give their matriculants a broader training, not in the so-called higher branches, but in those features of drug-store practice with which they will be sure to come in contact. This is the actual and beneficial trend of medical and dental education, especially, and is the essence of the more recently introduced vocational instruction.

* Read before joint session of the Section on Commercial Interests and the Section on Education and Legislation.

Much confusion has ever existed as to the proper placement of pharmacy. The triangle has been used to illustrate its three distinct sides—professional, trade, and social. But what vocation is there that has not these three distinct phases—knowledge, practice, and living? There is, at present, no reason for discussing whether pharmacy is a profession or a trade, because it has become a fact that neither professional men nor tradesmen are any longer estimated merely by their vocational attachments, but each is creditable or not, as rated by standards of competency and worthiness. The professional man who is now in favor must be scientific and worthy, while a tradesman who is unscientific and unworthy is now not in favor. More and more in the future will the classification of men be by standards of abilities, attainments, and merits, because it is clearly apparent that what were formerly described as distinctly social or moral characteristics are now considered to be essential parts of a person's general make-up and actual necessities to professional or commercial success. Boors are no longer able to win substantial encouragement in any of the needed occupations of mankind.

Following all this fundamental treatment of the subject, a more specific consideration may be interesting. First of all, a better and happier spirit should be instilled into the student's being; the "joy of work" and the "rewards of work" should be presented and re-presented until the seed sown will at last take root and grow in some part, at least, of the student soil. It is well known that the average student body presents very little good soil, and this pointedly brings up our bounden duty in this regard. We will never fully meet our obligations unless the colleges positively refuse to *continue* as students those who cannot be taught, those who will not learn, and those who are not interested. I will not touch upon the much-discussed subject of admission requirements. The question of "certificate" preparedness or unpreparedness is of so little importance, when compared with the actual character of the student, as shown or developed in the class-room or laboratory, that it is scarcely worthy of serious consideration. At the end of the first semester a survey of each freshman should be most carefully made, and *then*, not at the final examination, should it be decided whether or not he is inherently fit to practise pharmacy. The great majority of students are not "better equipped for business" by the colleges, simply because they, themselves, are incapable of taking on the equipment, or are unwilling to do their part to secure it. Just here it may be most truthfully stated that the student receives but little encouragement to better equip himself in modern efficient business methods from either the precept or example of those with whom he has had business associations.

Forgetting for the time the incapable, the indifferent, and the badly-enviored student, what can be done with the better class? As just stated, the instillation of the higher, better spirit of working joyfully and looking with confidence for ample and satisfying rewards.

The colleges will never properly equip their graduates for business until they teach them to make the most out of their personalities, their bodies; how to overcome defects, how to keep them healthy and clean, how to dress and groom them; their carriage, their address, their manners. The boy who cannot learn to use his knife and fork properly will never learn to win creditable success in the business world.

The man who can work honorably and profitably take part in business affairs of to-day must speak well and pleasingly, must write well and pleasingly. His success will not depend upon whether he has one, two, three, or four years of high-school work, nor will it come simply because he is a Bachelor of Arts. He must

know how to talk and *know* how to write; with all these abilities the college must see that he is equipped. It will not do to say: "He should have learned such things at home or in the grammar school." The college puts its diploma-stamp on the finished product; is it really "finished"? Many of these homely requirements are often discounted by eminently successful pharmacists because they do not remember that they, themselves, *did not always possess such accomplishments*, but gained them in the hard school of experience.

Æsthetics and ethics, in their broader and more elementary sense, are prominent essentials in business equipment. Business men acquire knowledge of these sciences, they scarcely know how, and use them to great advantage. A differentiation of window displays, of signs, of advertisements will show the application. "He profits most who serves best" is a demonstration of the highest and best ethics applied to business getting. "The Golden Rule" has become a commercial law with many.

The colleges of pharmacy can arrange a commercial course that will more nearly suit the requirements of the pharmacist than does the average course at *business colleges*. It may be that the matriculant *should* have acquired much of this commercial knowledge previous to his entrance; so might he have learned how to talk and write, but he did not do so, and the certificate of a high school guarantees no such attainments. Credits and credit men, commercial agencies, their power and uses, are fantastic and appalling to students of pharmacy. Commonplace commercial law, contracts, insurance, promissory notes, drafts, are all necessary parts of the pharmacist's working machinery. I have learned to call the simplest bookkeeping, which is no more than truthful business records, the student's "bugaboo." Department accounts are startling, and yet it is claimed that a pharmacist may be safely launched upon this very practical world of ours without the least idea of what it all means. What a very small part of banking is the handing to the receiving teller of funds and the distribution of them by making out checks! How pitiable is the young pharmacist who knows no more of the helpfulness of a bank than this! A much more pleasing picture is the young pharmacist who goes to the proper bank official with such a clear statement of his business, and with the pleasing ability to present it, that he is able, on his own endorsement, to secure the loan of sufficient money with which to develop offered opportunities. Contrast the pictures of the unfortunate fire victim without inventory, trying to convince the insurance adjuster of the amount of his loss, with another who knows how much insurance to carry and shows, without hesitation, exactly where the goods were located, what they were and their value.

The wholesaler has repeatedly and persistently shown what the pharmacist most needs to make him a good commercial risk, and is necessarily patronizing in his proffered advice and assistance. What these men of larger experience tell us are the needs of the pharmacist, comprehend many of the things the graduates should know, and when they have been taught these items of drug-store practice and they have been learned, then the colleges have better equipped their students for business.