

thing that the majority have not suggested, you are called on to defend your reason for suggesting that for a running-mate.

I spoke of one instance yesterday in which a man suggested and carried the sale through on a twenty-five-cent bottle of witch hazel—sold a vibrator for \$17. That is almost extreme, but it shows the plan on which they work. They sell the goods or hand over the goods that are asked for and never make a substitution in that way—anything to bring back and make a constant customer of the man who comes in; but a man's ability is gauged by the number of sales he makes. A man who continually sells one item and sells one item only is not rated as a good salesman. The man who has two or more articles on his check is rated as better, and the more double sales a man makes, the better he is rated.

A PLAIN TALK ON BUSINESS METHODS.*

BY B. E. PRITCHARD.

In the preparation of this paper there is no intention of handing down a line of advice; my only reason for attempting to write it is to present truths that an experience covering more than forty years behind the counter and at the prescription case has taught me.

If memory serves me aright, it was one of our own living beacon lights, Dr. William C. Alpers, who in one of his many valuable contributions to the literature of pharmacy said something like this: "As we try to move forward in the busy streets of the city we often find that those who get in our pathway and block our progress are men who are moving in the same direction as ourselves, but who seem to have no objective point, and by their loitering movements retard those back of them who have."

What an excellent picture is here presented! Men who ought to be depended upon to help improve the business or profession in which they engaged are often the most serious handicaps we have to overcome—the sprags that interfere with the forward movement of the cause which we hold so dear, and to the elevation and improvement of which we have devoted the best years of our life.

Any man who has ever undertaken to work for the passage of legislation, which has been submitted for the purpose of putting the practice of pharmacy upon the high level it should occupy, has learned to his sorrow and bitter disappointment that he has been trammelled and retarded, and in nearly every instance defeated, by the opposition of men engaged in conducting alleged drug stores.

For sixty-three years the American Pharmaceutical Association has been striving to reach this goal, yet to-day that which it has sought to accomplish seems to be still a mirage, the sight of which encourages faithful men in the ranks to persevere in the good work, hoping that some bright day their labors will bear fruit for the benefit of those who shall come after them. Do not lose heart, brethren; during almost two thousand years the gospel has been preached to all nations, and in every tongue, and yet there are several millions still unconverted. The same condition which faces us, faces Christianity—men who have been leaders, men who have preached the doctrines of Christianity to others, have themselves become stumbling blocks to those to whom they have preached; and yet, how many are ready to declare that the Christian religion has failed in its mission? As the world has been made better, and still better, by the good work of faithful Christian men who have given of their best to make it so, so has the practice of pharmacy been improved and will continue to improve so long as there shall remain workers in our ranks who are faithful to their trust—men who will continue to hold to their ideals and preach them to their fellows.

* Presented before Section on Commercial Interests, A. Ph. A., San Francisco meeting.

The trouble with us fellows who try to point the way by looking backward is the same as a motorist who puts the headlight on the rear of his car where it will only serve to blind those who come after him instead of lighting up the roadway and showing them the spots to avoid.

When we succeed in eliminating from the drug business all those who are concerned only in making their investments pay dividends, without regard to the character of the business done, we will have made a long stride in advance, and will have removed some of the sore spots on pharmacy that cause men to look with dubious eyes and regard the keeping of a drug store as a mere cloak to cover sinful transactions—often a disguise for a bar-room. Then, too, there are men who, under the guise of drug stores, conduct places where so-called patent medicines, worthless fakes and questionable articles are exploited at demoralizing prices, without any responsibility on the part of the owners either as to safety in quality or honesty in representations; and the pharmacy laws of most states do not hold these men amenable to their provisions—do not restrict ownership of drug stores to men qualified to practise pharmacy. They, almost invariably, annul to a great extent their own purpose by the use of some phrase, such, for instance, as this, which is taken from the pharmacy law of my own state, Pennsylvania: "Nor shall it interfere with the making and dealing in proprietary remedies, popularly called patent medicines, nor prevent storekeepers from dealing in and selling the commonly used medicines and poisons."

It is generally conceded that patent medicines should be given no recognition in pharmacy; that their sale should be discouraged, and their indiscriminate use by the public frowned upon. At the 1915 meeting of the Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association, during the discussion of a proposed venders' license law, a case was cited as "an awful example." It was shown that a certain patent medicine had been mixed in a bath-tub in a hotel and later hawked upon the city streets. During this discussion one of our most valuable members with difficulty restrained himself and held his peace, and, as he expressed himself to me later, this is what he had in mind: "We men who are here condemning this particular act on the part of one man as an awful example are guilty of freely handing over to our friends and patrons every hour in the day, stuff of a similar character, concerning the antecedents of which we know nothing, and of the contents of which we are absolutely ignorant, much of which have been thrown together under just as vile, or even worse, conditions than the one cited. What right have we to cast stones at others when we cannot come into court ourselves with clean hands?"

There has been under way for some time, under the auspices of the National Association of Retail Druggists, a movement known as the "Propaganda for Reform" in prescription writing, by the exploiting of U.S.P. and N.F. preparations. This is a righteous campaign deserving of wider application than is being given it.

But along comes the Harrison Narcotic Law, with its numerous regulations, one of the latter, Treasury Decision 2172, covering the provision for exemptions, which places proprietary preparations and remedies on exactly the same level as U.S.P. and N.F. preparations: "Prescriptions written by registered physicians calling for any quantity of the narcotic drug unless such prescription is written for a preparation or remedy prepared in accordance with the United States Pharmacopœia or National Formulary, or other formula, or private or proprietary formula, carried in stock by a dealer which may be dispensed without a prescription."

There you see that the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, with the sanction of the Treasurer of the United States, tells us, in effect, that there exists no difference

in their opinion between the vilest ready-made patent medicines, without reference to how or by whom, and the official preparations made in accord with the provisions of the recognized standards that have undergone the tests laid down by the highest authority on the subject in the world (1915).

To this, Mr. J. W. England, Secretary of the Council of the American Pharmaceutical Association, in a paper read before the Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association, makes this objection: "This decision is open to serious question, and the Treasury Department has erred in making such a decision, whereby the medical profession is discriminated against in favor of ready-made preparations and remedies, and that an unnecessary burden is thereby imposed upon the physician and pharmacist without resultant advantage."

It is the duty of every man to do his utmost to foster and protect the good name of his chosen calling, and hence every clean druggist should, whenever opportunity presents itself, protest against the ignorantly constructed legislation that is constantly being urged to regulate pharmacy, while at the same time he should be just as zealous in striving to secure proper legislation when an organized effort is being made to secure it. Dr. J. H. Beal tells us in the *Midland Druggist* that "The American public is a fair-minded jury but it must base its conclusions on the evidence and arguments submitted. If we do not deny or protest against the sensational stories of druggists' faults and crimes, we have no right to reproach the jury for accepting the alleged facts as true."

In the effort the Fair Trade League is making to secure relief from unfair competition, every right-minded druggist should lend a hand by directing the attention of his congressman to the Stevens Bill. The Fair Trade League has gone into court with a clear-cut, formal complaint that will bring the practice squarely before the Federal Trade Commission, the decision of which is expected to settle the question of the legitimacy of under-selling campaigns.

I trust that every member of the American Pharmaceutical Association who listens to the reading of this paper, as well as those who may read it later, will accept it as an appeal not to sit down with folded hands and wait for the other fellow to take action, for just as surely as he does, there will be no good thing accomplished. You are "the other fellow" to your neighbor, and if he depends upon you and you depend upon him, it stands to reason that it simply won't be done. Wake up! and let the people know you are on earth!

That the learned judges of the courts are beginning to see a new light upon this iniquitous method of merchandising is made apparent by reading this statement made by Judge Hough of the Federal Court at New York quite recently in the course of a decision handed down in a case in which a price demoralizer was complaining that his supply of a certain article was being cut off and asking an injunction against the manufacturer; the court said: "If injunction were granted, defendant and many retailers would be injured, and the microscopic benefit to a small portion of the public would last only until the plaintiff was relieved from the competition of the fourteen-cent grocers, when it, too, would charge what the business would normally bear. In short, it is the plaintiff and not the defendant who pursues methods whose hardship and injustice have often been judiciously commented upon. In my judgment, the prevention or limitation of practices such as plaintiff's (so far as consistent with statute laws) is the reverse of unreasonable."

All that seems to be needed now is for every honest merchant to set his face toward doing his part, and keep his own hands clean by avoiding complicity in any of the nefarious schemes that are being constantly brought forward to demoralize straight business methods. It is strict attention to the needs of your customers, and quality of service that bring and hold trade.