

## RECONSTRUCTION APPLIED TO COMMERCIAL PHARMACY COURSES.\*

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Recent surveys<sup>1</sup> of the courses in commercial pharmacy show an inclination to spend a great deal of time on the teaching of non-essentials. The reason for this condition is most probably due to the fact that there has not been enough counselling together upon the purposes and possibilities of this course. Consequently a great variety of subjects are being taught, with the result that the course does not have the merit it deserves. The mention of any of the well-established courses in pharmacy brings to mind something pretty definite as to subject matter, and as to purpose. This cannot be said about commercial pharmacy, and for this reason it seems expedient that a study of the situation be made.

In recent years many colleges and universities have introduced into their curricula, courses designed to meet a demand on the part of young men who were contemplating a business career. Commercial pharmacy was made a part of the pharmacy course for the same reason. There is this to note, however, namely, the courses offered by the colleges and universities are given, usually, to the study of business principles rather than business methods, while the teaching of commercial pharmacy is quite the converse. However this may be, there is no real reason why a course in commercial pharmacy cannot be formulated along fundamental lines, yet lose none of its significance, and prove valuable and creditable.

No less an educator than Paulsen (1) said that, "everybody ought to acquire such knowledge as will assist him, on the one hand, in following his special calling to the best possible advantage, and on the other hand in understanding the world from his position in life." How much the latter principle of this suggestion seems to be no part of our purpose in much of our modern education, yet it sounds so rational, especially for men who plan to enter business. Truly professional men seem to get this point of view pretty well. Such a principle might well guide us in planning instruction for hundreds of our young men who go out into pharmacy every year. The idea does not belong to a past educational plan for Wooster (2) in a recent article says: "The business man lacks the functional point of view, lacks ethical training in general and needs to be pointed toward some other criterion of good work than merely that of good selling. It is easy to overlook the functional point of view. Even the better-than-the-average business man seldom has much vision into the operations of business as related to the social scheme of things. His business is for the purpose of making money." This is a pretty severe charge, and all the more serious because it so nearly tells the truth. Someone has said that during the war business often had to subordinate profit to service, which is business in its true function. This is no less a great principle in peace than in war.

Our country is entering upon an era of extensive trade relations with the world. Never before were we so in need of business men with visions of justice. Our missionaries beseech us to send into the foreign fields only those business men who have high moral and ethical ideals. The reason is self-evident. Such a request

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\* Read before Section on Education and Legislation, A. Ph. A., New York meeting, 1919.

<sup>1</sup> See reports, 1918-1919, Subsection on Commercial and Legal Pharmacy, J. A. Ph. A., 8, 502, 1919.

as this places a load of responsibility upon those who teach the young business man. Our schools cannot afford to stand for anything less than this high ideal. We must inject into our instruction a breadth of vision and the proper attitude of service in things related to business. This can be done by developing a social consciousness. With this will come the spirit of service, which is ultimately a life ideal, and from this the motive that attaches great significance to the performance of a task. We need to remember that business is founded upon our social needs and is allowed to exist because society permits its needs to be supplied through business organizations. In view of this, service is the only possible business policy. Such a policy is exemplified, professionally, by the physician who has much more concern and interest in the satisfactory recovery of his patient from a difficult operation than in the fees he is to receive. How much different is the policy of service from the one so assiduously promoted, that the ultimate purpose of merchandising is financial profit. Such a motive leads to stagnation in the individual and results in no good end for society. An opinion altogether too current now is that business operations are generally conducted with a fine disregard for moral principle, as if business success were conditioned upon taking advantage of every opportunity to delude those with whom transactions are carried on. How much better it would be for business to create the feeling that to him who renders the better social service, in the production and distribution of his merchandise, shall go the greater profits.

Someone has said that "we are learning that men are born not so much with inalienable rights as with imperative duties." This imposes a heavy duty upon every citizen, and especially so upon college trained men. Page (7), an authority on business problems, says: "The educated man who goes forth to-day from his Alma Mater without some recognition of his social responsibilities, of the need of his activity, not alone along the more sordid lines of self-support but in playing the part which his mental training gives him the power to assume, as a leader in the wider activities of the social life, does not attain that nobler and higher success in life which is the reasonable goal of intelligent and enlightened ambition." No less a business man than Carnegie (8) has made the statement that "a professional career does not have for its chief end the ignoble aim of making money, and is free from the gravest danger which besets the career of business, which is the most sordid of all careers if entered into in the wrong spirit. While the primary aim in entering business may be that of making money it should not be the last consideration." Surely not all the reward of business is dollars, yet we constantly talk of every little business enterprise in terms of dollars. The subject of making money always gets a hearing from an ambitious student, and we too easily make use of the situation. Higher ideals are bound to develop in men when the functional point of view has been properly pointed out to them. There is in the business career plenty of room for the exercise of man's highest powers and good qualities.

In speaking upon the higher duties of citizenship, Bryce (9) says: "The man who is to profit by the safety and prosperity the community provides, must seek its good and place his personal will at its disposal. Benefit and burden, power and responsibility, go together. Duty is the co-relative. Nevertheless, the latter relation is the one which always tends to be forgotten and to drop into the background." This keen utterance unmistakably speaks the truth, and the only way

to bring about a high standard of business conditions is to share responsibility with benefit, serve while being served; but the service must be of a different quality from the over-the-counter-as-fast-as-you-can kind. It is time for us all to shift our economic interests from utility to welfare. In doing this, individual wants must lose their finality for the sake of the common good. Mutual interdependence is such a dominant factor in our present day civilization that it is often said that coöperation is the corner-stone of our economic system. Tufts(11) puts the idea concretely when he states: "The great war has clearly brought out one very important fact about business and industry, namely, that every important business and industry concerns not only the men who are in it, but the whole community."

Even though the needs of the group or society should be the principle applied to business, there would be no reason for less efficiency, as some argue, in one's particular field. Quite the opposite. The virile teacher goes beyond the confines of his class-room to promote intellectual leadership in community affairs. The doctor is charged with the duty of guarding the health of his vicinity. No less a responsibility falls upon every individual and much more upon the college trained man, and no exemptions should be made on account of profession or trade. Men after all like to feel that they are of some use in the world. They all desire friends, home, honor and an approving conscience. Money cannot buy these essentials of life, and since they are so worth-while, why not direct the student's mind to dwell upon these priceless elements, which are the foundation stones of our whole social structure. Smith(12) in a recent writing stated that "the greatest danger in the process of vocationization is that it shall be too narrow and technical in its aims. The only guarantee against this weakness is to see that social motives are instilled along with individual motives and that socializing methods are as much in evidence as individual instruction."

Stuart(10) also says, "Scientific training in the colleges ought not, however, to be limited to preparation for research or for a technical career. There should be cultural courses also in which 'the aspect of nature' and some conception of the human and social significance of nature's infinite resources can be effectively presented. Education in its ultimate meaning consists not in factual knowledge but in standards of judgment and of conduct."

The colleges found a high place of service in the prosecution of the war. Let us see to it that peace will not make them less serviceable in the time of reconstruction. Would that they might direct the restless thought of the day toward the principles of stable democracy, a democracy that will endure.

Perkins in an address(13) says: "One of the greatest advantages in a college training is that the earnest student learns to think and to think straight; and in the business world, the present and the immediate future hold out opportunities for the real thinker as never before existed." "A high order of ability in each and every calling was never so much in demand as it is to-day. Institutions and affairs are only as great, only as strong, only as useful as we make them."

It is an accepted fact that our colleges are playing a great part in training of men and of women to perform some task in the way which seems most advantageous. In a much less degree they are teaching young men and women to understand their positions in their relation and importance to society. On a page of a bulletin of one of our leading universities, under the title of "College Life," appears

the following: "College life is world life on a smaller scale. The thoughtful and successful citizen soon discovers that in addition to his narrower business responsibilities, he must give time and attention to those activities which have to do with general community life and its improvement." This is a splendid doctrine, and if this spirit pervades the class-rooms, there is no doubt about the caliber of the men who go out from the institution. What other institutions can foster this spirit so freely as our colleges? A man trained in such an atmosphere as just suggested, is not apt to lose all of it, even in the business world. As clerk, manager, owner, in any business enterprise, he will be able to render a service to society.

In the curriculum of every school of pharmacy is to be found one course after the other, offered with the purpose of fitting the man to more efficiently perform a definite technical task. There is no disapproval of this, but how much greater would be the efficiency if the individual knew and understood, as well, his duty to society and the place of his service in the great world of activity. Such an understanding would result in greater enthusiasm for the spirit of democracy and social justice and would lead to a more equitable condition in every way for everyone. To be a part of the great socializing movement of our institutions of learning it would seem wise and expedient for schools of pharmacy to reconstruct their courses in commercial pharmacy, in keeping with the ideals heretofore set forth, with the idea of not only making better pharmacists, but better men as well. It is far more important that we become makers of society than just members of it.

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