

## Section on Commercial Interests

Papers Presented at the Fifty-Ninth Convention

### PHARMACEUTICAL WINDOW DISPLAYS.

OTTO RAUBENHEIMER.

Pharmacy makes the claim, and this very justly, in my opinion, of being a profession. But let us consider if the displays in the majority of our pharmacies and drug stores impart this impression to the public as well as to the medical profession.

We find, first of all, displays of nostrums and patent medicines guaranteed to cure all ailments. It is a well-known fact that many a patent medicine manufacturer has reaped his fortune through such free advertising of his remedy. Druggists and pharmacists should bear well in mind that by dispensing such patent medicines they stamp them with their personal approval and recommendation. That such displays are very frequently of the illicit kind, can be seen in the "make man tablets," "female regulator," in the "bust developer," etc., etc. Pictures of "before and after" tend to make such displays still more obnoxious.

Another window display which is often met, and which the writer considers a disgrace to pharmacy, is a certain malt whisky, recommended as "the highest type of medicine for consumption, grippe," etc. Displays of china and glassware, bric-a-brac, cutlery, and even of jewelry, even if profitable side lines, are entirely foreign to pharmacy and will never help to give physician or layman the necessary confidence which is needed in buying drugs and for the compounding of prescriptions.

One of the strangest displays which the writer has ever noticed was canary birds, at a reduced price, in a Nassau street drug store in New York City. Not only are fountain syringes, together with their fittings, openly displayed in some drug store windows, but also that "marvelous spray syringe," that "female friend," which ought to be in the house and hands of every woman, married or single, together with full directions and explicit illustrations. But the climax in pharmaceutical (?) window displays was undoubtedly reached in the one which the writer noticed in the Quaker City, not very far from the oldest college of pharmacy, namely, a very large window full of suspensory bandages, reduced to 2 for 25 cents.

I can not close my introductory remarks without mentioning the very ethical and esthetical window display so frequently met, that is, toilet paper in rolls and packages. Very suggestive, indeed.

How can we expect to impress the laity and the physicians that pharmacy is a profession with such window displays?

The stock of even the average drug store is of such variety that pharmaceutical

window displays can be made which are a credit to the profession and which, at the same time, are profitable to the pharmacist.

*Goods which should not be displayed in show windows.* The education of the pharmacist should most certainly have taught him that light, and especially direct sunlight, has a bleaching or reducing action upon most substances. But judging from the window display of hydrogen peroxide, olive oil, perfumery, etc., etc., the knowledge of the men who make these displays seems to be very limited.

Such displays can be seen daily. Imagine the rays of the sun striking "peroxide" for an entire week! Imagine olive oil, which the producer in Italy or France has most carefully manufactured and put up in sealed bottles, now treated in such a manner in the U. S.! Imagine delicate and expensive perfumes, which have been skillfully compounded, blended and aged in cool and dark rooms, now exposed to the direct rays of the sun! Among other goods which should not be displayed in exposed show windows I might mention Malt Extract, which barely contains enough alcohol to preserve it in a cool place, and also rubber articles, which, upon exposure, become hard and brittle, or, as ordinarily expressed, "lose their life" and thus become unsalable.

The resources of the pharmacist who is somewhat ingenious and practical are very numerous.

*Filtration.* This simple process can be made quite an attraction if carried on in the show window. Water colored blue, with a little ultramarine, can be filtered clear and is a strange phenomenon to the average person. And still more so is the decoloration of water tinted with an aniline dye and filtered through kaolin.

*Continuous Filtration,* or one lasting quite a long time, can be easily arranged by an inverted large, f. i. 5 gallon bottle over a large filter. To prevent any splashing, the bottle should be fitted with a stopper and one or two pieces of glass tubing.

*Percolation,* especially if a bottle containing the colorless menstruum is inverted over the percolator, has proven quite an attraction in my window, and the highly colored percolate, dropping at regular intervals, arouses the curiosity of the public.

*Distillation.* The process carried on in the show window will give that pharmacy a professional and scientific look. A Remington still can be used for the distillation of water, and also for the recovery of alcohol from the marc left after percolation. If a glass retort is used, the difference between the colored liquid to be distilled and the colorless distillate will be a mystery to the average public.

The writer has found an upright or reflux condenser attached to a large flask quite an attraction. This method of distillation has the great advantage of taking care of itself without any constant watching.

*Precipitation:* This process can be utilized in the manufacture of milk of magnesia by filtering the solution of magnesium sulphate into the solution of sodium hydroxide contained in a large and tall bottle. The magnesium solution being heavier in gravity sinks to the bottom, forming magnesium hydroxide on its way.

*Washing, Decanting and Siphoning* can be demonstrated in the manufacture of the same preparation.

*Laboratory Ware* displayed in the show window is one of the best attractions.

The variety is so large that there is no trouble to select from. I will mention the following: funnels and percolators displayed on stands, percolator jars, tincture press, drug mill and sieves, water bath and evaporating dishes of glass and porcelain, precipitating jar and stirring rods, etc.

*Chemical Glassware* makes a still more scientific display, a display which gives the public the impression that this pharmacist belongs to another, i. e., to a higher class. The following can be displayed to great advantage: retorts, condenser and receiver, different styles of flasks, including volumetric flasks, pipettes, and burettes with stand, wash bottle and drying jar, beakers and test tubes in rack, hydrometers in jar, specific gravity bottle and even blowpipe.

*Prescription Utensils* constitute a very appropriate window display, which will impress the laity and also the medical profession and will thus help to increase the prescription business. The following might be displayed: different sizes of mortars and pestles of wedgewood, porcelain and glass, graduates holding from minims to a quart, even a prescription balance, pill machine, porcelain tile, tablet and tablet triturate machines, suppository machine and moulds, infusion jar, spatulas, an assortment of pill and powder boxes, different sizes of ointment and other jars and a row of prescription bottles, holding from one drachm up to a pint or quart.

*Prescription books and files*, especially if you have an old established pharmacy, always make an interesting window display. At the same time a sign might state the number of prescriptions compounded during a month or year, or during the entire existence of the store. While on the subject of books I will also mention a

*Literary Display*, as f. i., some of the Pharmaceutical Journals, which you read or some of the Books on Pharmacy, Chemistry, Botany, Materia Medica, etc., or some of the Pharmacopoeias and Formularies in your library.

Such a display, quite especially if it includes some foreign journals and books, will undoubtedly raise you in the opinion of the public above the level of the ordinary druggist. Along the same line, it is well to occasionally make a window display of your college diplomas, your licenses and your certificates of membership in different pharmaceutical associations. An odd display of that sort will interest the public and will benefit your business without any doubt. One of the most interesting displays is one of living plants in the show window.

It is not necessary to be an expert botanist to go out in the fields, or even in the city limits to gather a great many medicinal plants. The writer has done so on numerous occasions and might mention the display of digitalis in bloom, together with historical facts, from its introduction into medicine as a diuretic by the English physician, Withering, up to the discovery of its glucosides and the application of biological standardization.

A blooming larkspur plant, *Delphinium Consolida*, with its blue dolphin shaped flowers (whence its name), has proved quite an attraction and besides that has greatly helped the sale of tincture of larkspur.

Conium, the poison or spotted hemlock, with a bit of its history, as having been used by the Greeks to execute their criminals, and as being the plant from which the drink was prepared to poison Socrates, has proven an interesting window display. A jar of poisonous conium seed next to a jar of harmless anise seed together with a proper explanation of the danger of confusion, will have the bene-

ficial effect of inducing the laity to patronize the educated pharmacist in whom they have confidence.

*Drug Display:* Above all a druggist or pharmacist should occasionally make a display of drugs, including drugs in their crude state, in his show windows. Flowers, herbs, barks, roots, seeds, etc., displayed in boxes and jars, and of course properly labeled, make an interesting as well as an educational window display. If neatly written or printed signs, and a bit of history accompany this display, it will arouse still more attention.

I might also call your attention to the fact that at least one pharmaceutical manufacturing house in connection with its assayed preparations has placed in the hands of the pharmacist a set of drugs in glass stoppered bottles, with neat celluloid labels giving synonyms, definition, habitat, history, etc.

Besides window displays of vanilla beans in jars, of rhubarb in the root or in fingers, cubes and powder, of boxes of chamomile flowers, of tins of insect powder, of bars and pieces of castile soap, sticks of extract of licorice. The writer, during the Hudson-Fulton celebration in New York City (August 25-October 3, 1909) made a cinchona window display which was also exhibited at the October pharmaceutical meeting of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. This pharmaceutical window display is described in the *American Journal of Pharmacy* of November, 1909, p. 534-536, and was even abstracted in the "Mittheilungen zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften," Bd. IX, Heft. 3, p. 325, published by Leopold Voss, Hamburg.

The writer could continue to enumerate displays of chemicals and of various preparations, of specialties and of seasonable articles, but too much time has already been occupied.

Before closing, however, I want to call your attention to two facts, namely:

1. *Historical Information* as to the origin of drugs, the etymology of their names and their history is of great benefit in the practice of pharmacy and also in pharmaceutical window displays. Such a simple display as of sulphur, rochelle salt and cream of tartar lozenges can be made highly interesting and educational by displaying at the same time jars of these chemicals together with placards of **their history**.

2. *Dollars and Cents in Window Displays:* From a pecuniary standpoint these displays should also be profitable. In this age of commercialism even the pharmaceutical window displays have to produce hard cash. That such can be done I have fully demonstrated to my own satisfaction. The display just mentioned of sulphur, rochelle salt and cream of tartar lozenges greatly interested the laity, who willingly and rapidly bought these at 10 cents per box, while my nearest competitor offered sulphur and cream of tartar lozenges at 5 cents a box.

Through the display of chemical glassware the students of the high school bought their flasks, glass and rubber tubing and also chemicals at my store and also remembered me when their families were in need of any drugs, prescriptions, etc.

The display of the flowering larkspur plant, together with jars of the whole and ground seed and the finished tincture, has greatly helped the sale of the drug as well as the preparation. A neat show card in your window announcing that

you keep a complete line of chemicals and reagents will bring to your store students, amateur and professional photographers and physicians for their supplies and other goods.

*Conclusion:* The subject of window displays is most certainly an important one. In fact one of our bright pharmaceutical editors has even written a book, "Window Displays for Druggists," of which two editions have so far been published.

I trust that my suggestions for pharmaceutical window displays will be somewhat considered and will have the desired effect, namely, that more displays will be made pertaining to pharmacy, displays which will gain the confidence of the public and the physicians, and which will be a credit to the profession of pharmacy.

#### DISCUSSION.

MR. FORD: "It is refreshing to hear of the many things that we can put in our windows. I think about the nicest window display I have seen is the one represented in the hall outside, consisting of native medicinal plants. Especially effective as window ornaments are drug plants, concerning which the public has more or less information, as the Conium plant with which Socrates destroyed his life, or the Henbane plant, the juice of which was injected into the ear of Hamlet's father. A good window display can also be made from U. S. P. and N. F. preparations. We had one at Denver a while ago consisting of the best looking preparations put up in good style in gallon bottles. Such a display commands the attention of both physicians and the laity.

"Anything which has life or possesses motion is effective as a window display, such as revolving mechanical devices, etc.

"I have had a good many window displays along the lines indicated by Mr. Raubenheimer. One of the most effective consisted of the slow dropping of a potassium iodide solution into a solution of mercuric chloride. Each drop as it strikes the chloride solution becomes pink, then red, and falls to the bottom in a red layer, leaving a colorless solution above."

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#### SIMPLIFIED METHODS OF RECORDING CHARGE SALES.

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AMBROSE HUNSBERGER.

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This brief communication is offered without pretense of embodying entirely new suggestions, or of outlining hitherto unknown methods of handling the problem of charge sales, but rather with the idea that its presentation might encourage an interchange of individual views and experiences from which a "composite" impression could be made which would more nearly present the ideal method of entering charge sales unfliningly, quickly and accurately.

Two classes of stores may be eliminated as having no vital interest in this topic: the one class being made up of the very small drug stores having few or no charge transactions, while the other embraces the very large stores—more or less of the "department" type—in which systematic records of both cash and credit sales are conveniently taken care of by assistants, whose duties and qualifications are purely clerical.

The class which is most vitally concerned in this problem consists of what might be termed the average drug stores, and includes approximately eighty per cent of the establishments devoted to the practice of retail pharmacy.