

## SHALL THE COLLEGES TEACH AND THE BOARDS EXAMINE IN COMMERCIAL PHARMACY, JURISPRUDENCE AND LATIN?\*

BY JACOB H. REHFUSS.

In the year 1917 the New York State Board of Pharmacy recommended to the Board of Regents of the State Department of Education that candidates for pharmaceutical licensure be examined in a sixth subject to be known as Commercial Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Jurisprudence and Pharmaceutical Latin. The recommendation was adopted by the Board of Regents at a subsequent meeting and since January 1918, this subject has been included in the examinations. The grouping of these three widely separated branches of pharmaceutical training under one heading was an arbitrary one rather than founded upon any basis of relationship, the main consideration being to bring within the scope of this new subject for examination sufficient material to make it the equivalent in importance to each of the other five subjects in which the board was already examining.

To the writer of this paper was assigned the task of getting up the first sets of questions and of rating the answer papers.

### A NEW FIELD.

The field was a new one inasmuch as no other State board had undertaken a similar examination and there was, therefore, nothing to serve as a guide to the examiner which might show him how far to go into the subjects.

This was particularly true of commercial pharmacy. The second edition of the Pharmaceutical Syllabus, on page 152, defines the subject and outlines the course of instruction to be given in our colleges of pharmacy, yet the answer papers of the candidates in the early examinations showed that there was a wide variation in the manner and extent to which it was being taught. This may be accounted for, first, by a lack of proper textbooks; and, second, by the unlimited scope of the subject which permits the individual teacher to use his own discretion as to what parts of the subject shall receive attention, resulting in the omission of some matters that may be regarded as important and an ill proportioned stressing of other matters that are little needed by the pharmacist.

### SOME PROPOSED QUESTIONS.

Before making up the first year's examination questions appeals were made to various sources for specimen questions. Some responses indicated that the writers kept strictly in mind the practical needs of the average retail pharmacist, and there were other replies which left the impression that our future pharmacists should be equipped to become efficiency experts or world statesmen.

To illustrate these extremes I will quote from a page of specimen questions submitted by one correspondent:

29. What relation has the prescription department to the rest of the store in a commercial way? Why in your judgment are there not more prescription departments successful financially?

30. How would you arrive at the expense account of your prescription department and what would you include in those expenses?

31. How in your judgment could economy be practiced in a drug store without in any way cheapening the service? State in detail what this economy consists of.

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32. Commercially considered, should the pharmacist manufacture his own galenicals and special preparations, or should he buy them? Give your reasons.

33. Explain why a drug store doing a good business does not always show a good substantial net profit.

34. How would you arrive at your gross profit? Your net profit?

35. To be successful, how often should you turn over your stock during the year?

36. What is a safe limit of expense and what do you include in that expense?

37. What is necessary to build up and retain a good cigar business?

38. What is necessary to build up and keep up a good soda business?

39. What points would you consider most important in selecting a site for your new drug store?

40. What system of accounting would you use in your store?

It is obvious that the above furnishes some excellent material for a commercial pharmacy course, but what shall we say of the questions which immediately follow these and which were recommended by the same writer?

41. Explain briefly the following: wealth, capital, income, marginal utility, marginal productivity, consumers' surplus, elastic demand, marginal cost, marginal producer, diminishing return.

42. Distinguish clearly between large scale production and monopoly, speculation and gambling, horizontal and vertical combination, capital and capitalization, corporation and partnership, value and price, trust and corner, joint cost and joint demand, money and credit, redemption and retirement of paper money.

43. Explain the causes which tend toward large-scale production and under what conditions the small retailer may hope to survive.

44. Show that the demand for any commodity is composed of a series of demands and may be represented by a curve. Illustrate how the demand may be changed by advertising.

46. Explain the determination of competitive market price under conditions of constant cost, increasing cost and decreasing cost.

49. Show the relation between the volume of money and credit and the general level of prices. Give illustrations.

50. Give three arguments for and three arguments against international bimetallicism.

51. Discuss the feasibility of a system of inconvertible paper money.

53. Give an outline of the banking system of the United States under the Federal Reserve Act.

54. Explain the origin of financial and industrial crises, and show how the business man can guard against them.

57. (a) Distinguish clearly between rent, interest, profits, and wages. (b) Show how the marginal productivity theory applies to the determination of each of these shares.

58. Give three arguments for and three against the single tax proposal of Henry George.

There is great need of a conference of those who teach commercial pharmacy in the colleges of the State to take up the work of standardizing the subject so that uniform instruction may be given in all the colleges; to confine this instruction to those matters directly related to the conduct of a pharmacy. One very remarkable fact has been revealed in rating the answer papers in this branch and that is the lamentable ignorance shown by many of the candidates in answering questions involving simple mathematics, cumulative interest calculations, discounts, a correct comprehension of what is meant by such terms as gross and net profits, the percentage cost of doing business and such other problems whose correct solution is largely dependent upon straight thinking.

It might be contended that we have a right to assume that the high school graduates when they enter our colleges of pharmacy have been taught and should know these things, but since we find they do not and that they are essential to the

successful conduct of a pharmacy, are we not justified in making them a part of our licensing examinations?

The subject of pharmaceutical Latin is one that needs very little consideration here other than to state that it seems to have been taught in all the colleges to the extent outlined in the pharmaceutical syllabus with a due regard for and a proper conception of the pharmacist's need for Latin. Fortunately standard text books are available for the guidance of the teachers and apparently are used. It is to be noted, however, that in the early examinations it was evident that the candidates had not attached enough importance to this branch of their training, being especially deficient in the translating of the Latin directions on prescriptions. This condition has improved and in the later examinations better results were obtained.

In the case of pharmaceutical jurisprudence there is pretty much the same condition that we meet with in commercial pharmacy. Lack of proper textbooks and lack of uniformity in the teaching of the subject are apparent, judging by the answer papers of the candidates.

#### A MATTER OF SCOPE.

There should be no difficulty in coming to an agreement as to the scope of this subject. It is obvious that the future pharmacist must have an accurate knowledge of all the laws and regulations pertaining to the dispensing of medicines, more particularly the State pharmacy laws and the rules of the board of pharmacy; the federal and State narcotic laws and regulations; the federal and State liquor laws and regulations; the federal and State pure food laws; and, in the larger cities, the local board of health regulations respecting the sale of medicines. He needs also to have a general knowledge of common law and equity, particularly as they relate to everyday business procedure. The candidates have not shown very satisfactory results in their examinations in this subject. They do not seem to have a precise knowledge of these laws although it is a part of the curriculum of every college of pharmacy in the State. This is not to be regarded as a criticism of the teachers of pharmaceutical jurisprudence; due consideration must be given to the fact that these candidates have been influenced to a large extent by the manner in which the various laws have been observed in the pharmacies where they have been employed while attending college. They had absorbed more of what they had seen in practice than what they had heard in the lecture room.

With the ever increasing number of laws affecting pharmacy which have come into existence in the past few years there has naturally been resultant confusion and only those who follow all legislation closely can hope to conduct their pharmacies even approximately in strict compliance with the law. Herein lies a great opportunity for the teachers of pharmaceutical jurisprudence to get together and dedicate themselves to the task of making a compilation of these laws and regulations affecting pharmacy with the view of securing their publication, to serve not only as a textbook for the student but as a guide for the practicing pharmacist who in all probability did not have the advantage of a course in pharmaceutical jurisprudence when he attended college.

They might go even farther and take upon themselves the task of solving some of the problems that are involved in conditions which at present threaten the reputation and stability of pharmacy. I refer specifically to the disgraceful condition of ex-saloon-keepers being permitted to secure store licenses to open pharmacies ostensibly for the sale of drugs but in reality for the sale of whiskey, and there is no provision in the pharmacy law today to stop it. It may not be out of place here to offer the opinion that any legislative remedy sought for this condition lies not in the amendment of the State Pharmacy Law but rather in an amendment to the State Excise Law prescribing how and by whom beverage spirits may be sold. If it was required that the holder of a license or permit to dispense beverage spirits on prescription must be a licensed pharmacist and the sole owner of the pharmacy a stop would be put to this abuse of the privileges granted our profession.

In conclusion the writer desires to express the view that the board of pharmacy examination in this sixth group of subjects has brought about a broader teaching of them in our colleges and has compelled the students to give them the serious attention they have always deserved.

The result will be that the coming generation of pharmacists will be better business men, more law-abiding citizens because of their intimate knowledge of the laws pertaining to their profession, and better able to give to the public that expert service expected of all professions.

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#### A FEW FUNDAMENTALS OF COMMERCIAL PHARMACY.

BY P. HONOROF.

In the absence of a definition for Commercial Pharmacy, some of the functions included or listed may be considered. Here opinions will differ. I name cleanliness first. It is an economic necessity, a moral duty, and an essential of success to have a Pharmacy clean. I suggest that a course in Pharmacy include instruction in the handling of the three brushes—the window brush, the floor brush and the bottle brush. The ability, knowledge and willingness to handle the aforementioned brushes will, in most cases, contribute to the success of the retail druggist.

This does not mean the turning of a pharmacist into a porter; the application is, when show windows are clean the pharmacist will most likely display some of his wares, which, no matter what they are, will attract the passerby's attention, and the latter will very soon habitually look for the window display. Therefore, through intelligent handling of the window brush one will soon indulge in window trimming, which gives consideration to all sides of the business and will have a wonderfully stimulating effect on the commercial as well as the professional part of it.

*The Floor Brush.*—The knowledge and desire of handling the sweeping implement will assist greatly on the inside appearance of the store. When people come into a public health institution, they expect it to be somewhat superior to the ordinary mercantile establishment—the first guide to health is cleanliness.

*The Bottle Brush.*—Step behind the prescription counters of some drug stores. What are the characteristics of this most important and fundamental part of the business—the medical kitchen, where prescriptions are carefully compounded by