

THE BUSINESS SIDE OF PHARMACY

This department is devoted to the discussion of problems of business administration and commercial policies relating to the various branches of pharmacy.

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To many scientific pharmacists and particularly to some pharmaceutical educators, the term "Commercial Pharmacy" is distasteful. Their contention is that there is nothing commercial about pharmacy, *per se*, although admitting the necessity of selling non-pharmaceutical merchandise in the present-day drug store. What we have reference to in discussing topics under the heading of commercial pharmacy is really the business side of pharmacy and articles which have hitherto appeared from time to time under the heading "Department of Commercial Interests" will henceforth appear under "The Business Side of Pharmacy."

The address of Chairman Charles W. Holton, of the Section on Commercial Interests of the American Pharmaceutical Association, read at the Cleveland meeting and published in the December issue of this JOURNAL, is one of those straightforward, right-to-the-point documents which breathes exact knowledge of the conditions in the retail drug business with every sentence. If you have not read it you ought to, whether you are an educator or a scientific worker or a retail druggist.

So many of the complaints about the practice of pharmacy to-day are due to a lack of appreciation of the actual conditions which those who are engaged in various phases of pharmacy must meet. Every one in pharmacy must know what the conditions are and it is folly to close our eyes and imagine conditions are different. The wish that retail pharmacy might be more professional is often father to the expressed thought that it can and must be, even if such greater professionalism is to be legislated into existence.

Mr. Holton says: "That there is need for real pharmacy no one will deny. That the practice of real pharmacy exclusively in a retail store will provide a satisfactory living is to be doubted. But that a combination of real pharmacy and the sale of numerous articles not related to healing can be carried on in the same store is entirely possible. And the greater the specialization in the drug store into separate departments, conducted by competent individuals, the better service the public will receive in both of these branches."

Back of the change that has come over the retail drug business in recent years, there is something more powerful than the desire of individual pharmacists to seek new sources of financial gain. It is the demand of the public for pharmaceutical service *when needed* that has brought more drug stores. The amount of medicine dispensed, the number of prescriptions written and the general demand for home remedies may be no greater in proportion to the population than formerly but the population has been crowded into cities and towns so that districts which were formerly served adequately by one drug store now keep two or three stores busy. People want quick service to-day and do not care to go very far for it. A drug store cannot be close at hand to everybody if its income is derived solely from the sale of medicines or prescriptions. The public demands that it be close at hand. There-

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fore the druggist must sell articles which are in greater demand than drugs to keep the business going while waiting for the occasions when pharmaceutical service is desired. There is nothing incompatible in this condition, nothing requiring separation of pharmacy into two types of stores and nothing requiring legislative supervision over professional pharmacy. It is a perfectly normal development and Mr. Holton rightly points out that: "As time goes on and the drug store becomes more and more specialized as to its drug, prescription, candy and soda departments, each presided over by the most skilled help, the service of the store to the physician and the public will improve still more and the pharmacist will be assured of a reasonable competence."

The fact that modern methods of large scale production of pharmaceuticals have made it unnecessary as well as often unprofitable for the retail druggist to do much manufacturing of his own, does not reduce the need for knowledge of the methods of production on his part. To the contrary, such knowledge is really more essential than ever in order that he may properly distinguish between good and poor quality products. The development of the drug business in recent years has naturally caused those who are interested in pharmaceutical laboratory work to gravitate to the manufacturing houses where splendid opportunities await them. Those who are interested in the retail drug business have their choice, after graduation and becoming licensed, to conduct strictly prescription and medical supply stores or what is to-day considered an average drug store. Public service demands the latter type of store for the reason already pointed out and the fact that even the most exclusive prescription stores find it necessary to sell many side-lines indicates the trend of things in retail pharmacy very clearly.

There is, however, one serious obligation which rests heavily upon the pharmacist in the new type of drug store and that is to maintain and develop the professional aspect of his establishment; to practice according to the same code of ethics in both the business and the professional departments and to live up to the slogan, "Your Druggist Is More than a Merchant," in the eyes of the public and the profession.

Professor Chittenden in his recent address on the work of Pasteur cited the fact that while this great investigator contributed splendid researches in the field of pure science, he also applied his scientific skill and attainments to certain industrial problems with great success. The significant thing about Pasteur's relations with industries and trades was that he never lowered science to the level of trade but always endeavored to exalt trade to the level of science.

The modern druggist will do well to emulate Pasteur in this for not only will he thus keep the professional flame alive, but it will also result in greater appreciation of his services on the part of the public and consequent increase in his business.

DAYTON DRUGGISTS' ASSOCIATION.

A. C. Erbaugh was elected president of the Dayton Druggists' Association at the December meeting; other officers are: I. M. Lebensburger, vice president; Otto Moosbrugger, secretary; H. A. Ireland, treasurer; J. Rupert Miller, manager of council for term of five years.

H. S. Noel addressed the January meeting on the subject "The Art of Merchandising for Profit." In this lecture various practices were pointed out as unprofitable, and a number of new points were considered, all tending to the betterment of the druggist, both as a professional as well as a business man.