

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF PHARMACEUTICAL FACULTIES

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—It seems to be a growing belief among laymen, and even among practical druggists, that one of the chief functions of a College of Pharmacy should be to produce practical and safe compounders of drugs and distributors of poisons. So thoroughly did the citizens of Virginia believe in this, that the thought of the people crystallized into the form of a law, which was enacted by the legislature of that state two years ago. The passage of that law placed immediate responsibility for producing the proper type of dispensers upon the one College within the State, the School of Pharmacy, of the Medical College of Virginia. In order to show how this institution is meeting the situation we are printing in this issue an article by Professor W. G. Crockett of the teaching staff. Every Conference school, as well as every Board of Pharmacy, will do well to follow closely the Virginia experiment. If the Medical College of Virginia makes good at the task given it by its legislature, it means the death knell to store experience, which all of us know, and most of us are willing to say, is an anachronism. If the Medical College of Virginia shows that it can make capable and safe dispensers, without store experience, there is no reason why the rest of us cannot if we use the same effort. The paper along similar lines by Dean W. J. Teeters of Iowa, is a fitting companion to Professor Crockett's, and the one by Dean Spease of Cleveland (p. 146, February JOURNAL A. PH. A.) again points out what should be accomplished in the training of the Pharmacist. This thought cannot be too often repeated.

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DISPENSARY AND HOSPITAL TEACHING IN THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF VIRGINIA.

BY W. G. CROCKETT.*

Many of you are familiar, undoubtedly, with the law which went into effect in Virginia recently making it possible for a high school graduate, who has in turn graduated from a recognized school of pharmacy, to apply for registration without having had any previous drug store experience. The legislature of Virginia passed this law on its own initiative, basing its action on the fact that no such preceptorial training is required of physicians and dentists. Since studying the question closely, we in Virginia have become convinced of the wisdom of such action on the part of our law-making body.

We as educators in pharmacy have two well defined functions to perform. First, we must so train our students that they will be of greatest service to the public. Second, we must strive to the utmost to ameliorate working conditions within our ranks, and thus attract the more worthy young men and women into our profession.

In seeking to attain this object, if good judgment dictates that we discard certain teaching and preceptorial methods which may have been of inestimable value in the past, we should yield them willingly and adopt others which more nearly suit conditions rather than retain them for their traditional associations.

The apprenticeship system, although it has been of great value in the past, does not fulfil its mission at present because it militates against the future prestige of pharmacy by repelling from our profession promising young men and women who should be attracted to it. This is a day of specialization. Opportunity for service, financial reward, working conditions, educational and preceptorial re-

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quirements, and professional status after graduation are deciding factors in the mind of the youth who is contemplating studying a profession. Furthermore, medicine, dentistry, engineering and other professions are our competitors. These latter ones have advanced by leaps and bounds not because their opportunities for service are greater than ours, not because their average financial reward is far in excess of that offered by us, but because the entrance to ours is obstructed by a barrier known as "Two years of servitude at nominal salary," during which time the duties shall consist chiefly of tending a soda fountain, selling stationery and trafficking in patent medicines.

Bear in mind the fact that our duty in educating pharmacists consists chiefly in making them proficient in the art and science of compounding and dispensing, and in offering them such basic principles as will serve to protect their interests in business. This can be done as effectively during a college course as it can in the two years of apprenticeship that precedes or follows it. Furthermore, the alert young man of to-day who has graduated from a high school, the one who has been reared amidst good surroundings and is inspired with high ideals toward service and professionalism, the one who should constitute the fiber of the pharmaceutical structure that we are to build for the future, looks with disdain upon the two-year period of servitude which leads to the portals of pharmacy.

When he stops to compare our profession with others that require four years' training his decision to choose another is not surprising, since in the latter he can devote the entire period to technical study and thus place himself on a higher professional plane, and since working conditions and financial reward are not sufficiently attractive in pharmacy to compensate for the two years of distasteful and slightly productive apprenticeship required. As a result, a large mass of the pharmacists who are in the making to-day consists either of those who have not sufficient funds to enable them to pursue some other course, or of those who have drifted to us because they are of the type which follows the line of least resistance.

The apprenticeship system in the past was necessary and useful; to-day it is an obstruction to progress. The sole question in the minds of those who would remove it should be: "Can the colleges offer during their regular course in pharmacy, a sufficient amount of actual prescription compounding and dispensing of medicinal substances to enable them to equip a pharmacist within their own walls?" This can be done and is being done, hence it resolves itself into a question of willingness, facilities and financial resources on the part of the colleges. Those schools which are located in cities should find no difficulty in establishing connection with pharmacies which are maintained by hospitals and free dispensaries. In fact we found in Richmond that such institutions welcomed our assuming control of their pharmacies for teaching purposes.

The School of Pharmacy of the Medical College of Virginia now operates two separate and distinct dispensing pharmacies. One of these is fed by the clinic in our medical school and the other is maintained by the three allied hospitals owned by the Medical College. The former has been operated by us for several years, but we assumed control of the latter only recently, that is, after the enactment of the law referred to above which makes it possible for graduates in pharmacy to become registered without having had any previous drug store experience.

Approximately ninety prescriptions a day are filled in these two pharmacies; and during the college session all the compounding is done by our senior students under the supervision of four graduate, registered pharmacists. At the beginning of each session the senior class is divided into small sections and each section assigned to dispensary duty for a period of approximately three months. It is so arranged that all prescriptions are delivered to us between the hours of one and two, and four and five, hence, during the three months' period each student compounds an average of eight prescriptions a day.

The prescription experience is quite varied, as there are seventy physicians on our dispensary and hospital staffs. In addition to this, many of the patients in the hospital are under the care of their own private physicians. We are safe in assuming then that the prescriptions which come to us during the college session are written by a minimum of eighty physicians. We dispense no stock solutions, but on the contrary it is the policy for the physicians to prescribe whatever they think most nearly meets the needs of the patient, regardless of cost. Our hospital pharmacy carries a complete line of proprietaries, serums and vaccines, with which the students become familiar.

Satisfactory service in dispensing is now our most rigid requirement for graduation. No student is recommended for graduation who has not convinced the four registered pharmacists in charge of his dispensing that he is a good and safe dispenser, even though his rating in other subjects may have been excellent.

In conclusion, we in Virginia maintain that by proper utilization of the facilities offered by hospitals and dispensaries, adequate experience in compounding and dispensing can be offered the student during his college course to make him sufficiently proficient in this respect to entitle him to registration. However, in order that this be a success certain precautions must be observed: financial resources and teaching facilities must be adequate; classes must be divided into small sections for teaching purposes and the instructorial force must be sufficiently large to permit of individual instruction.

These conditions have been fulfilled by our college. Virginia has taken a progressive step which eventually will place pharmacy in that State on a plane with other professions. With firm conviction in the wisdom of our course we invite your closest scrutiny of our work and its results. May your criticism not be tainted with prejudice. When pharmaceutical educators admit the faults of their preceptorial methods and meet in common council with open minds and unbiased judgments to rectify the errors of the past, then and only then will pharmacy command from the lay and professional world the recognition which it so justly deserves.

THE HOSPITAL, DISPENSARY AND COLLEGE OF PHARMACY.

BY W. J. TEETERS.*

Probably no part of the work of instruction in Colleges of Pharmacy differs so much as the teaching of prescription work. This is due to the fact that conditions are different at the various institutions. It is very evident that institutions connected with Medical Colleges, if the dispensary is in charge of the College of Pharmacy, has a decided advantage. Under such an arrangement the student

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