

## 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.

CONDUCTED BY DR. ROBERT P. FISCHER.\*

The editors of our pharmaceutical journals could render a real service if they would insist on the elimination of the word "ethical" from articles appearing in their publications when it is incorrectly used as a substitute for the words "professional" and "scientific." So often contributors to the pharmaceutical press and speakers at meetings of associations talk about *ethical* pharmacists and *ethical* pharmacy when the context of their papers or addresses clearly indicates that they either have no conception of that word or that they use it because they believe their readers or listeners know that they mean "professional" or "scientific," when they write or say "ethical."

The dual nature of the drug business of to-day makes it necessary to have some words or group of words to properly designate its divisions. This doubtless accounts for the introduction of the word "ethical," but its use in designating the professional or scientific side of pharmacy is unfortunate. Any business or profession which is conducted on an honest plane, and with due regard for the rights of the purchaser as well as the vendor, is an ethical business. A grocer, a hardware man, or a barber can be just as ethical as a physician or a pharmacist. Scientific knowledge does not affect a man's ethics or the ethics of a business. The moral standard which guides a business and the duty of the business man toward others in his own line and toward his clientele, constitute the ethics of that business or of the persons in it. The same is true of the professions.

It follows then that ethics has nothing whatever to do with the type of merchandise a man may sell or the service he may render in his drug store. When we look at the prescription pharmacy which specializes strictly on pharmaceutical work, it is not proper to say: "That is an ethical drug store," implying that the drug store at the next corner which has a soda fountain, a cigar stand, and sells a lot of miscellaneous merchandise, is not ethical. Both stores although totally different in the type of business on which they specialize are ethical pharmacies as long as they have a due regard for their obligations to society.

This question was forcibly discussed by Dean R. A. Lyman, at the recent convention of the New Jersey Pharmaceutical Association, when he pointed out that the drug store of modern times which gives a service to the public, both from a professional and business standpoint, is an institution of which pharmacy and the pharmacist need not be ashamed. It is only when such a business or its proprietor departs from the ethical standard that guides every decent business and profession to-day, that pharmacy is being harmed.

There is a growing feeling among students of pharmaceutical conditions that the present type of drug store has come to stay for a while at least and that the solution of our present problem is not a division of drug stores into two types. The professional work and the business work of the drug store can be carried on under the same roof, without any difficulty and certainly with much greater con-

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venience to the public. It must be borne in mind, however, that the code of ethics which we have adopted covers both phases of the pharmacist's work.

When one reads the codes of ethics of various business men's organizations, such as the Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions Clubs, one gets a clear insight into the manner in which business men in general are striving to place commerce and trade on a higher plane. The old adage "caveat emptor" is no longer the maxim of business. Perhaps the fact that business men are striving to do things on a higher ethical basis is not wholly unselfish but it has had the effect of making it impossible for any organization to exist very long to-day which does not give either in goods or in service a dollar's worth for every dollar it receives.

In pharmacy, more so than in any other line of work, there lies an opportunity for leadership among business men in spreading the gospel of a greater service relation between those who buy and those who sell.



Left—Apothecary's Indenture, 1776, of Thomas Boulter, 9th apothecary of Pennsylvania Hospital, 1773. Right—Contract of Pennsylvania Hospital with Continental Army for Use of "Elaboratory," in 1778.—From "History Pennsylvania Hospital"—former, p. 480; latter, p. 62.

PRESCRIPTION PRICING.\*

BY FRED W. AMES.

What shall I charge for this prescription? This is a question I have heard in my own and many other stores. Why that should be is more than I can understand.

\* From a paper read before the Section on Commercial Interests, A. Ph. A., Cleveland meeting, 1922.