

The solution to the chain store problem does not lie in hoping for its solution through the happy demise of chain stores but in a thoughtful study of the points in which chain store service excels—and in an earnest effort to give service as good and at as low a price to the public.

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## WHAT A BIG CITY DRUG STORE HOLDS OUT FOR A RECENT GRADUATE.\*

BY CLIFFORD H. RUDES.<sup>1</sup>

The college of pharmacy graduate stands on the threshold of his career in many ways. Being young and unsophisticated he is apt to take the mistaken attitude that, inasmuch as he has completed his college course successfully and has perhaps conquered the state board examination, he is already "made." Such an attitude is by no means criminal, it is simply a grossly mistaken one and pardonable because it is the outgrowth of enthusiastic, confident youth. Nevertheless, the sooner the college graduate comes to a realization of his standing with the world, the better for himself and everyone concerned, and the higher the order of his intelligence, the quicker will this true adjustment come.

To hasten this adjustment it would be well for the college graduate to realize that his college course has done exactly what it was intended to do—given him the best possible assortment of mental tools and the best possible training for using them in his future efforts to carve out a career for himself.

The world lies ahead of him, hard and cruel, but always interesting and full of treasure for those who play the game straight, honestly and intelligently. It is a question if there ever will be a more momentous period in the life of a young man than when he emerges triumphant from college to do battle with the world.

He has many important things to decide regarding his future course of action. The first step may influence his whole future career. Of such vast importance is the careful consideration of this first step, that in the hope of impressing it as strongly as possible it seems that a little story regarding the two proverbial Irishmen who were putting up in a hotel for the first time would not be out of order—

They were in their rooms on the 8th floor of the palatial hotel.

Says Pat to Mike, "Where is the bathroom?"

Answers Mike—"Go to the end of the hall and take the last door to the left."

Pat went, opened the wrong door, stepped through and landed at the bottom of the elevator shaft, 8 floors below.

Mike, worried over Pat's absence, went to investigate.

His suspicion was aroused on seeing the elevator shaft door open, so he stepped to it and called down, "Pat, are you there?"

Faintly back from the shaft's bottom comes the answer "Yes—look out for that first step."

### PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE.

Generally speaking, about the first step taken by the average college graduate is the securing of a desirable position. Comparatively few go directly into business, "lack of funds," as a rule, preventing such a step. In a way this condition at this

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period of the graduate's life is a blessing, even if it is decidedly disguised, because few graduates have enough so-called "practical" drug-store experience to warrant their stepping immediately from college into a proprietor's shoes. This may be a difficult piece of logic for the graduate to comprehend, but it's true nevertheless, and he will realize the truth of it as the years roll on. His college course has given him a wonderful training—the best possible—to the extent that it was meant to, but it could not and never was meant to make him proficient in the art of handling some few thousand and one situations and conditions that arise and are peculiar to actual every-day work in the drug store. Looking at things from a selfish angle perhaps, is it not better for the graduate to familiarize himself with all of this most necessary detail in someone's else drug store than in his own? If he is associated with the right kind of a proprietor allowances will be made for his natural shortcomings, due to inexperience; he will be corrected before harm is done one way or another, and under the watchful eye of the management will be gradually brought to as near a degree of perfection as is possible. And all of this will be done without any perceptible effect on the regular functioning of the store's business. On the other hand if the graduate were to embark immediately in business for himself—well, he might possibly under certain circumstances and with a lot of luck manage to come through all right, but the chances are that through his handicap of practical inexperience, and through his efforts to ferret out for himself certain fundamentals absolutely necessary for the successful conduct of a drug store, he would find himself up against such a Herculean task that final surrender to the inevitable "crash" would be almost certain. The college graduate is thoroughly versed in all of the subjects embraced in the college curriculum, but none of these subjects were ever intended to impart a thorough knowledge of certain business principles absolutely necessary, as before stated, to running a successful retail drug store. Such knowledge of vital importance can be obtained only by one method—and that is through actual experience and close observation. So then, though a graduate may be fortunate enough to possess enough "wherewithal" or "backing" to immediately, upon graduation, embark in business for himself, it is not, for his own sake, and for the sake of the community in general, advisable to do so. He should not consider himself competent to go into business for himself until he has rounded out at least two years as a pharmacist in the employ of someone else. Three or four years would be still better. And this regardless of how many years he put in as apprentice before entering college. No college graduate can afford to jeopardize his career by inviting possible business failure through going into business prematurely. The two or three years spent as an employee of the other fellow is very apt to be an experience to which the success in later years, to a greater or lesser degree, can be attributed. This same period as an employee helps him to become a better employer. By this is meant that the employee is given a taste of what life is like when working for the other fellow. If he, the employee, is of the right kind of stuff, his experience in this respect will undoubtedly make him more tolerant with his "help" when he becomes an employer. There is no question about the fact that the man who has "been through the mill" makes the best employer. He has a broader understanding and is more tolerant. For these reasons he is more popular with his help, coöperation with him is more complete, and his business naturally benefits.

Thus it is that the most logical step for the college graduate to take is to seek a job.

#### SECURING EMPLOYMENT.

This is another matter in which a certain amount of discretion should be used. Of course there are jobs and jobs. The country is full of them most of the time. There are good jobs and bad jobs, in big cities and small towns. In many instances the college graduate's finances are so depleted from the drain incident to his years in college that almost any kind of a job appeals to him. As a rule he ends up by taking the one that pays the higher wages—regardless of the nature of the work and, it might be added, the bent of the people to whom he has hired out. And it is a question if anything that can be said here will ever change the graduate's attitude in this respect. Nevertheless, there are many things to be taken into consideration in seeking and accepting positions, besides money. The big question in the graduate's mind when seeking a position should be: "Which position will give me the broadest all-around practical drug store experience between now and the time I go in business for myself?" The wage to be received should be of secondary consideration, for the reason that the wage received will neither make nor break the recipient, during the interim between college and ownership, while the quality and quantity of the experience received might.

Now, of course, the little hamlet, the village, and the small city must have their druggists. Some of the drug stores in small cities compare very favorably and in some instances are far ahead of big city stores for volume and variety of business done. This is the exception however. Generally speaking, the live drug stores in the big cities are the ones enjoying the big volume and variety of business. Towards such stores, then, it would be well for the college graduate to turn, in seeking the position from which he could derive the most benefit in later years.

#### BUSINESS TRAINING.

The live store in the big city is the logical place for the college graduate to complete the business training of his college course.

Science says that there are no two persons of exactly the same mental and physical make-up. Ordinary observation proves that without the aid of science. The tastes and thoughts in men have much to do with the world's progress; the why and wherefore of these variations of human taste and thoughts will not be discussed; we know they exist and are difficult to overcome; so difficult, in fact, that even a college training along lines completely opposite to the natural urge, fails to wholly obliterate them. All young pharmacists have certain natural tendencies and in seeking positions they should as far as possible make selections which will give them the opportunities for work that they like best because, as a rule, one makes the biggest success of work in which he is most interested.

It is admitted that theoretically the pharmacist is trained to compound prescriptions and to do work pertaining to this art; it is known actually, however, that in the modern up-to-date drug stores of to-day there are many other departments of the drug store in which the pharmacist must work. For instance, the modern drug store must have to a greater or lesser degree, depending, of course, on the size of the store and its general character, besides its prescription clerk, a buyer, advertising manager, sales manager, display manager, photo supply depart-

ment head, toilet department head, etc. It is admitted that much of this work can be done by unlicensed men, but the licensed man may have the work to do and profit by the experience. In very few strictly professional pharmacies is there enough prescription work to warrant the devotion of all of the pharmacist's time to that work.

The college graduate who seeks a position in a big city drug store should decide upon what line of work appeals to him most; he should analyze his preference and qualification carefully in this respect. This may or may not be difficult. For instance, if it is found that one has a strong desire to become a manager, the chances are that he will be successful as such; if advertising appeals to him strongly, that is the branch in which he should start. Each possible line of drug-store work should be considered in this manner and then if possible a position should be obtained that will offer the best opportunity for studying methods peculiar to the desired position. One may ask, why so fussy about all of this, if the graduate is merely looking for experience until he goes into business for himself? Because, in order to be a success specialization to the nth degree is absolutely necessary nowadays. Business as it is carried on in to-day's drug store is of such a variety and scope that it is impossible for any one man to become expert in all of its branches. Therefore, the young man who specializes in one division, and absorbs all the knowledge he can of the others without interfering with the first, detracts in no way from possible success when he engages in business on his own account, but of greater importance is the comprehensive training he gets for taking care of himself in the eventuality (which comes often) of his never opening a store of his own.

For the graduate who is thoroughly convinced that he has a natural aptitude for practical pharmacy work, the strictly professional store should be his destination. Therein, as in no other store, will he have the opportunity through further study and application to advance in the profession of pharmacy to a point set only by his abilities.

For the graduate who finds that he has a decided leaning towards managerial, advertising, merchandising, buying, or display work, a position in the chain or larger individual stores should be sought. While it is granted that an unlicensed man could perhaps qualify in any of these positions, the licensed man with his college training and consequent familiarity with drugs is much better fitted than the former for any of these branches of work and is the only logical candidate for such positions. A manager, an advertising man, a buyer, a merchandiser, a display man, without an intimate knowledge of his goods, such as can only be obtained in a college course, would be greatly handicapped. On the other hand the college graduate, with the very knowledge that the unlicensed man lacks, is in a position to make a success of any one of these branches of work.

There exists a strong tendency in the average college graduate to "look down" on branches of drug store work such as the ones spoken of, because they are not strictly professional. Such an attitude on the graduate's part is all wrong. Each and every branch mentioned is an important one in every well-regulated drug store and is vital to the success of the business. To have become through hard study and close application a graduate pharmacist is indeed no small honor, but to be a pharmacist and also proficient in one or more of the other capacities mentioned is not only a double honor but a worth-while accomplishment that is bound to demand most de-

sirable recognition. Mastery of some one of the vital branches of retail or wholesale drug store work assures reasonable success, provided personal qualification and adaptation are not wanting. Those who have had years of experience can point to examples of successful men in all of the departments named. Retailers seek men of real ability along these lines and are ready to pay and to pay big for their services. The writer is well acquainted with one young pharmacist who entered the employ of one of the largest individual drug stores in the country as a clerk about ten years ago. He developed an intensive desire for being up on prices, both cost and selling. He studied prices systematically. Such application naturally produced results. His ability in this direction was almost uncanny. At just about this time a manager was needed. This man was given the position over the heads of older employees. In this particular store the manager did the buying. The securing of this position was the result simply of his specializing as he had done in prices. Needless to say he made good as manager-buyer and held this position for seven years. But he never stopped studying prices, the market and methods of buying. About three years ago one of the biggest department stores in the country sought and secured his services. He reduced the stock of the corporation and created a larger volume of sales than the firm had ever enjoyed. On the strength of this record, in January 1923 this man, who specialized in prices, secured a position with another larger concern as buyer-manager of the drug and toilet goods department at a salary of between \$6000 and \$7000 a year. And the end is not yet, for he is still a comparatively young man of good habits who is bound to go on and up. This is but one concrete example of hundreds of similar ones that might be given. The retail stores are full of men of mediocre ability; specialists and men of action are sought for.

The experience which the college graduate gets in the big city drug store is bound to be of great value to him in more ways than one. To begin with, the environment of big city life, especially to those brought up in small towns, will, to a certain extent, test the kind of stuff of which a young man is made. By the way he reacts to it will his true character be shown, not only to others, but to himself. The proverbial and varied temptations of big city life are always present in fact as well as in theory. In the average big city drug store the graduate is brought in touch not only with all sorts and manner of people but conditions which enable him to study humanity and its many-sided affairs; the manner in which he reacts to this experience denotes his true character. He should school himself to separate the good from the evil and to stick to the good. Thus and thus only will he build character, uprightly, the most valuable asset a man can have in the business world.

Many young men just out of college have a tendency to overestimate their actual value. This overestimation would not be so bad, perhaps, if they could keep it a secret, but as Abe Martin says, "it's hard for a man to have a corner on himself and not show it in his gait." Such an attitude arouses antagonism against a man and works to his detriment. No man is sufficient unto himself. He must depend on his fellow-men to a great extent, especially in the retail drug business, for his success. He must create good-will for himself among his associates and customers; he is greatly handicapped by an overabundance of objectionable personal traits. He should study the personalities and conduct of the big man in business. Employment in a big city drug store tends to correct erroneous opinion,

both as to ability and shortcomings; his constant contact dealings with conditions and people will teach him the proper value and balance of things as nothing else can.

Employment in the big city drug store also offers the best opportunity for studying up-to-the-minute business methods and policies. The average big city drug store functions from a business standpoint, along the lines that are as correct as human minds can make them. This is not so generally true of small town stores; but there is hardly a big city store business method or policy that would not work to an advantage in the former.

The standing of the retail drug business of the future is almost entirely in the hands of to-day's graduates. The standards of any business or profession rest entirely on the shoulders of that business or profession's personnel. The profession of pharmacy of the future will be as good or bad as the ideals of the present-day graduate.

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### MODERN PHARMACY IN CHINA.

BY CHARLES O. LEE.\*

Not so long ago the writer went into a modern dispensary in a large inland city of China. This store was found to be well stocked with all sorts of imported proprietary and patent pharmaceuticals. There was also a good stock of surgical instruments and supplies and a complete line of toilet articles. Most of these goods were in original sealed packages so that the purchaser could feel reasonably sure of the quality of the goods purchased here. There is also a prescription department in this store where modern prescriptions are received and filled in all confidence. Upon inquiry it was found that the pharmacist in charge had learned pharmacy in a store in Shanghai, having served a little more than a year as an apprentice.

This is the story of western pharmacy in China as it rapidly spreads from the larger centers inland. Those of us trained in the profession, with respect for it as such, receive a shock when brought face to face with such conditions. We are told that there are no laws in China regulating western medical and pharmaceutical practice. However, both foreign and Chinese western trained practitioners are quite well organized, so that there is at least a strong moral influence as regards modern medical practice in China. There is no such good thing for western pharmacy.

Nearly all of the branches of science, including medicine, are offered in the curricula of various Chinese and foreign modern educational institutions in China. So far we have heard of only one place where western pharmacy has been made a part of the regular educational work. Even in this place only a start has been made and just a few have completed the pharmacy course.

The mission hospitals in China have found it quite necessary to train some responsible young man to do their routine pharmacy work. Nothing like a sound course in pharmacy can be offered in hospital dispensaries, where equipment and teaching staff are scarcely adequate to carry on the most urgent part of the work. Occasionally a hospital has been able to train a few more men than it needed for its own use, thereby allowing them to be released for other places. Quite often

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