

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF PHARMACEUTICAL FACULTIES

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COURSE IN "COMMERCIAL PHARMACY."

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There is pressing need for the development of a high grade course in "Commercial Pharmacy," or business methods for pharmacists, and for several years the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy has been working at this problem, as has been described in previous papers, so a report of further progress may not be out of place at this time. For a number of years this College had offered the conventional course in "Commercial Pharmacy," as a part of the work in the department of pharmacy, in which the students listened to special lectures by a number of men more or less experienced in the various lines of work considered, such as salesmanship, accounting, advertising, window dressing, banking methods, insurance, partnerships, and so on. It was found that such a course was interesting, but it did not give results of much value and it was felt that a more thorough course was called for in which the students would actually work at the subjects considered, instead of listening to talks about them.

About five years ago, in 1920 and 1921, the question was thoroughly studied and it was decided that the traditional course in pharmacy gives the minimum technical training that is needed by all pharmacists, but at the end of this road, which all pharmacists must travel, the path divides. A small proportion of the students of pharmacy wish for further study along scientific lines and they are provided for in most colleges of pharmacy by graduate courses leading to higher degrees. The greater number of students, however, are more interested in the commercial aspects of pharmacy and they want only the minimum professional training. Heretofore, little or no provision has been made for imparting sound commercial training for these large numbers of students and it was thought that a graduate course in "commercial pharmacy" could be offered to advantage, as is now being successfully done in general business methods by several universities and colleges.

The aid and coöperation of the Graduate School of Business of Harvard University, the Liggett organizations and others interested were secured to develop such a course as was planned. It was logically worked out and never failed to get the interest and approval of pharmacists when it was described to them, but it did not succeed, because students failed to appreciate the value of the work and did not enter the class in sufficient numbers to make it worth while to continue the course on this plan, and it was necessary to modify it. During the three years that the original plan was followed it was clearly demonstrated that the idea of teaching commercial subjects in a pharmacy school by the laboratory method was fundamentally sound, and a great deal of material for a course based on this method was accumulated.

During the past two years, the work has been rearranged, to be taught during each year of the new three-year course leading to the degree of Graduate in Phar-

macy, and it is now a required subject in that course. It is expected that it will ultimately become a major subject, making a fourth department of study, added to chemistry, materia medica, and pharmacy, which have been the three major departments of work in the pharmacy course.

At present, the work in this subject occupies about four hours a week for each of the three years. During the first year of the course the student is given instruction in what will be most immediately valuable to him as a clerk in a retail store. Salesmanship, show-card writing, and window display are the practical subjects studied. As much of this work as possible is taught by the laboratory method. In salesmanship the student practices selling before the class, and the good points and those which can be improved upon are brought out by discussion. The work in show-card writing is practically all laboratory work. In window display every student has the opportunity to try his hand at setting up an exhibit. The theory work in window display covers the artistic elements, including a discussion of colors.

The introductory lectures on the theory of salesmanship are informal, the class as well as the instructor contributing. Among the topics considered are selling one's services, the relation of psychology and salesmanship, instincts, the sales process, suggestion, handling objections, types of customers, study of the goods, and improvement of the salesman himself.

In show-card writing, both brush and pen work are given, practice in certain fundamental letter forms being followed by the construction of actual signs. The study of an alphabet is followed by the making of words, which brings out letter spacing, and then by the completion of an entire card. Instruction is given as to the placing of the parts of the sign to secure the best appearance. At first the student copies cards, but afterwards he originates cards of his own.

During the second year the student passes from the more elementary work to that which has less immediate application but more ultimate value, whether he eventually becomes a proprietor or remains an employee. Law, accounting, and the theory and practice of advertising are the subjects studied. Knowledge of these should make the student a more valuable clerk, as well as lay the foundation for the work of the senior year.

In the study of law, the method used is a combination of the lecture and case methods, in order to give the best results in the time available. A discussion by the instructor of the principles involved is followed by a discussion of actual cases by the class. The principles of commercial law and the special laws affecting the druggists are thoroughly studied. Under commercial law, contract, sales, agency, and negotiable instruments are treated, giving knowledge which will enable the druggist to keep out of difficulty in his business relations, while those parts of the Harrison and Volstead acts which affect the retail druggist receive attention.

In accounting, double-entry bookkeeping is taught, as best adapted to the needs of the retail drug store, the object being not to make bookkeepers of pharmacists, but to enable the retail druggist to make use of double-entry bookkeeping in his business. The study of accounting is made very effective by the large amount of practice assigned to each member of the class. Each one works out several systems of accounts, one designed for a small business, one for a larger business,

and one for chain stores. In this work the student learns the source and preparation of business statements.

In advertising, the underlying psychological principles and the different methods of advertising are studied, and each student prepares several advertisements of diverse forms. The strength of various appeals, the form of advertisements, the use of type and illustrations, and the various modes of advertising the drug store are discussed.

The work of the third year is planned to prepare the student to manage a drug store. The course is given from the point of view of the employer rather than that of the employee as in the two earlier years. The principal topics are starting a business, purchasing, and selling. Besides these, certain miscellaneous topics are considered, such as taxes, employees, banking relations, and insurance. The work is on a discussion basis. Lectures are informal, and all students are presumed to have had drug store experience from which angle they can intelligently discuss the problems presented. The best thought of experts on these subjects is compared with the student's own experience, in order that he may see its relation to the work of conducting a store.

The question of competition and the factors affecting the location of a store are considered. The relative advantages of individual ownership, partnerships, and corporations are considered, together with the method of forming a corporation. Then general consideration of fixtures, lighting, and preparation for the opening follow. Some general considerations of finance and some of the pitfalls in buying an established business are discussed.

The subtopics under purchasing include the establishment of credit, general considerations, records, receiving and checking goods, turnover, stock records, and inventories, both perpetual and stock. Under selling are considered marking goods and the effect of various selling policies, methods of increasing sales, including sales letters, collections, and attitude toward the public, also relations with other pharmacists and other business men.

While it is not felt that the subject is fully developed yet, enough has been done with it to justify the belief that it is now placed where it belongs in the course, and that it will ultimately take its place among the most useful subjects taught in colleges of pharmacy.

DR. W. T. SANGER ELECTED PRESIDENT OF MEDICAL COLLEGE OF VIRGINIA.

Dr. W. T. Sanger, one of the prominent young educators of the south, has been elected president of the Medical College of Virginia and will assume his duties July 1. He received his Ph.D. degree from the Clark University in 1915.

Dr. Sanger goes to the Medical College of Virginia from the Virginia state board of education where he has served as secretary for several years. He succeeds Dr. Stuart McGuire, whose duties as a surgeon make it impossible for him to give the Medical College

of Virginia, as its president, the time necessary for the full development of that institution.

SEVENTH DISTRICT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF PHARMACY MEETING.

The boards of pharmacy of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, comprising the seventh district, held a meeting last month in Atlanta. Vice-President W. M. Hawkins, of Daytona, Fla., presided. Some of the problems to be considered at Des Moines were discussed. Secretary H. C. Christensen was present during the sessions.

THE COMMONWEALTH STUDY OF PHARMACEUTICAL EDUCATION.

BULLETIN NO. 6.

This is the sixth of a series of twelve monthly statements to be issued by the staff conducting this study.

Bulletin No. 5 carried, in response to a general request from publishers and readers of pharmaceutical journals, some results of the survey of nearly 1200 retail stores, which was conducted last summer. Now comes a request from textbook writers who are revising their textbooks.

The director of the study appreciates how valuable the results of this research will be to textbook writers and wishes to cooperate fully with any who care to take advantage of the findings. However, it is impossible to distribute any material at this time since nothing in the nature of finished reports has been reviewed and passed upon by the Advisory Committee. Since most of the studies are correlated they cannot be worked out independently and released for publication.

Following is a list of the headings under which the study is being conducted. Where assistance is being given by men outside the staff the names are given.

MIMEOGRAPHED COPIES OF THE FINAL REPORT ON EACH TOPIC WILL BE READY FOR DISTRIBUTION AT COST AFTER OCTOBER 1, 1925.

Pharmaceutical Jurisprudence—Dr. J. H. Beal, H. C. Christensen.

Pharmaceutical Traits and Ethics—Dr. W. W. Charters, Mrs. E. H. Kenagy.

Types of Ingredients in 16,000 prescriptions studied, known as "Type of Ingredient" study and discussed in Bulletin No. 3—Staff.

Nomenclature study was discussed in Bulletin No. 4. The Latin was worked by Prof. L. M. Monell and is now being reviewed by Dean H. C. Muldoon.

Arithmetic—Staff.

Dosage including Veterinary Dosage—Staff.

Toxicology

Physiology, Pharmacology, Active Constituents—These three studies are being worked together by Dr. A. R. Bliss, Jr. and when completed will be reviewed by Dr. Torald Sollmann.

Botany and Pharmacognosy including Geographical source, collection and preservation, adulteration and contamination. These studies are under the direction of Dean H. H. Rusby.

Physics and Chemistry are being studied under the direction of Dean Edward Kremers.

Bio-assaying—Dr. P. S. Pittenger is assisting in this study.

Bacteriology and Immunology—Staff.

Manufacturing—What should be manufactured by the pharmacist, has been determined by questionnaires sent to many teachers and pharmacists. The problems involved in manufacturing are being studied by Prof. E. Fullerton Cook.

Compounding and Dispensing—Compounding problems as drawn from 16,000 prescriptions studied. Study being conducted by Dr. Louis Saalbach.

Pharmaceutical English, History and Orientation being studied by Dr. W. W. Charters. Public Health, Sanitation, Hygiene, First Aid, Clinical Work, study being made by U. S. Public Health Service.

Insecticides and Fungicides by U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Library (methods of stimulating use of) by the Staff.

When completed the report will show just what information the pharmacist needs on these various topics.
