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ETHICS OF THE DRUG STORE.*

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In the days of smaller communities the minister, the doctor, and the pharmacist were looked upon as distinctive characters. They were held in high esteem by their neighbors, and the entire village looked up to them as men of education and refinement. Their advice was sought and respected, and their judgment was relied upon. And yet they generally were the poorest three in town—poorest in monetary returns. But they were richest in service rendered, for they truly gave their best to those who sought them and believed in their sincerity to their respective callings. To the pharmacist, the mortar and pestle was more than a mere symbol. It stood as a beacon of a dignified profession.

Medicines in those days were not sold in the village general store. The pharmacist, then, did not have to compete with large chain and department stores. Business, to-day, has invaded the professions, and no other profession has been so affected as pharmacy. In the whirlpool of commercialism pharmacy is gradually losing its prestige as a professional calling. And with the development of this commercialism there has come a lowering of ethical standards which are the heritage of the apothecary. To-day business has relegated to the side that which was once the chief purpose of the pharmacist; and more emphasis is placed on the soda fountain, cigar counter and novelty department. We hear more these days about business methods, more attractive displays, and less concerning enteric coated pills or fluidglycerates. It is indeed deplorable that the modern drug store has in many instances descended from the respected place it occupied in our fathers' time to the bargain-seeking emporium of our time.

But even more to be lamented is the springing up of the so-called drugless drug stores, that carry on like a regular pharmacy, except that they fill no physicians' prescriptions. This is the worst evil to-day to the public as well as to the corner drug shop. Such a state of affairs is a direct menace to the public health.

It is, therefore, up to the various pharmaceutical organizations to carry out an extensive campaign in the direction of suitable enactments which will place the sale of all medicinal substances, whether in original packages or not, in the hands of qualified pharmacists only. The elimination of the drugless drug store is in the interest of the public and the profession of pharmacy.

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