

contest with disease. They help to build churches, schools, clubs and other community enterprises. They know you and yours. Their interest in your welfare is that of a neighbor. They work in intelligent coöperation with the regular medical profession. They do not use high-power and blatant methods to explain useless nostrums. They carry in stock the tried and tested remedies which your doctor may see fit to prescribe in your hour of need. They do not sacrifice service to expediency. These men and women in conjunction with upstanding and conscientious members of the medical profession dedicate their lives to the preservation of humanity's most precious asset, namely, its health.

And that constitutes pharmacy's true relationship to the public.

PHARMACEUTICAL PRACTICALITIES.

BY ROBERT J. RUTH.

In the "Comprehensive Standard Dictionary" the word "practical" is defined as follows:

1. Pertaining to actual experience
2. Derived from practice
3. Being such in fact or effect

The title of this paper, "Pharmaceutical Practicalities," is then appropriate inasmuch as retail pharmacy will be considered from the standpoint of the conducting of same, and illustrations based upon actual experience derived from practice will be used freely in the discussion.

First let me quote a splendid article published in the *Literary Digest*:

"WHAT MAKES A DRUG STORE?"

The answer to this question propounded by an editorial writer in *The Druggists Circular* is undoubtedly—drugs. Without them it would be something else. Then why not feature them, he asks, instead of laying all the stress on soft drinks, candy and light literature? He writes:

Pharmacy is what makes a drug store a drug store. Remove it from certain stores and they would then differ but slightly from a mixture of beauty parlor, news and cigar stand, confectionery store, telephone office and "five-and-ten." Candy bazaars, tobacco shops and the rest possess strong attractions, each for its own clientele, but no one of them has that universality of appeal that is, perhaps, the drug store's chief commercial asset; in its more-or-less professional aspect lies the drug store's drawing power.

So thoroughly recognized is the magnetism of the mere words, "Drug Store," displayed over the door of a place of business, that many non-pharmacists have adopted them as a part of the name of their small department stores—stores in which no pharmacy is practiced. Drugless drug stores, however, have proved to be more of a delusion than a snare. They lack one thing which they invoke to bring them customers—they lack pharmacy, a professional side, an air of superiority over the ordinary marts.

This, however, is a digression. The main idea is that pharmacy is the stackpole around which many a successful mercantile business is gathered. Without pharmacy the business might and probably would, go to pieces. Pharmacy, then, is entitled to the fullest recognition as the main support of the business it has built up and holds together. As such, it should be kept in evidence at all times. It is not enough for the druggist merely to say he is more than a merchant;

he will find it to his advantage to let his store be a constant reminder of the fact that he really is. We believe we should not be going much, if any, beyond the truth, if we said that, other conditions being favorable, the more pharmaceutical a drug store appears the greater its appeal to buyers.

This, then, is to remind the druggist—indeed, to urge the druggist—to feature pharmacy. It is something in which he can take a just pride; it is something which emphasizes his superiority over the mere shopkeeper; and—it pays to feature it.

Let me then consider practical methods whereby the professional aspect of the pharmacy can be perpetuated without sacrificing net profits.

As a professional man the pharmacist joins hands with the physician, the dentist and the nurse in an earnest endeavor to serve the public and conserve and protect its health. We would be amazed to walk into a hospital and find it unsanitary. We would expect an appearance of immaculate cleanliness and orderliness. Were we to visit the office of a physician or a dentist, our impression of him from the standpoint of his professional ability would naturally be influenced by his personal appearance and that of his office and laboratory. If we found a condition of uncleanness and disorder our confidence in the man would receive a severe shock from the start.

The drug store, then, should first of all be kept immaculately clean, beginning with the glass in the show windows and extending on throughout the establishment to the rear door of the prescription laboratory. Even so, I have found drug stores which were clean but not kept orderly. Stock was placed upon shelves and in show cases in jumbled heaps and without any consideration for symmetrical display or attractiveness. A clean store with special attention to orderly stock arrangement is essential if the desired public impression is to be made.

The prescription department is the soul of the drug store and even though the public is not permitted, or should not be permitted, to enter the prescription department, physicians are and should be made well acquainted with this part of the drug store upon which the effectiveness of their diagnosis and treatment depends.

The physician is as likely to be impressed either favorably or otherwise by the appearance of the drug store prescription department as we are by the appearance of his office and laboratory when we visit him. If the laboratory is kept scrupulously clean, well stocked and orderly, the physician will feel confidence in the establishment. Dirty, cracked or broken graduates and mortars, rusty steel spatulas and other unsightly equipment detracts. Poisons and narcotics should be stored in separate cabinets; biologicals should be kept properly refrigerated and care should be exercised in the classified arrangement of chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

Pharmacists desiring a substantial prescription practice should maintain an established and methodical system of calling upon physicians and dentists in their communities. This practice has, in my observations, never been found lacking in productiveness. Some pharmacists have divided the duty of calling upon physicians with their prescription clerks.

Not only should several good trade magazines be read by the proprietor and his prescription clerks but, in order that the pharmacist may best serve the physician and the public, those journals of an exclusive professional nature, such as the *JOURNAL A. PH. A.* and the *American Journal of Pharmacy*, should be carefully

perused each month. I know of a number of successful pharmacists who subscribe to the *Journal of the A. M. A.* and thoroughly digest the contents of each issue. This enables them to keep up with the latest developments in medical practice, to discuss intelligently with physicians many subjects of importance, and supply them with the newest products. The advantages which these pharmacists enjoy and their enhanced reputations with the members of the medical fraternity are obvious.

Institutional advertising, featuring the professional service of the drug store, always increases the prescription business and the sale of professional products.

Inasmuch as the public sees only the windows and that part of the store in the front of the prescription case, it is essential that the windows and the display section of the store reflect a professional atmosphere.

Many pharmacists have discovered that professional window displays installed during Pharmacy Week, without the idea of direct profit, really pay handsomely. One pharmacist in California reported a 15 per cent increase in prescription business as a result of his Pharmacy Week window. Pharmacy Week experience has caused many pharmacists to install professional windows at intervals throughout the year.

It has been conclusively proven that volume can be built up by mass display of strictly drug store products, such as Milk of Magnesia, Cod Liver Oil, dental preparations and the hundreds of household and medicine cabinet supplies. Department stores have been constantly encroaching upon the sales of these products which are truly related to the drug store. In retaliation, many pharmacists have devoted their efforts to the sale of products unrelated to the drug store. The result has been that they have directly encouraged department stores to further feature drug store products. In the meantime those stores which have progressed with the times but have still kept their professional atmosphere and devoted their energies to the sale of drug store products have prospered. It is obvious that one hundred dollars' worth of Cod Liver Oil sold will pay as much profit as one hundred dollars' worth of toys. It is difficult to get the toy business and the Cod Liver Oil business too.

Let me now give some examples of ideas carried out in successful stores which I have visited. In a town of about 25,000 population, a pharmacist has built up an extremely successful business on the sale of trusses, abdominal supporters, elastic hosiery, canes, crutches and related items which should really be obtainable in drug stores. He disposes of about seventy-five pairs of crutches each year. He sells about fifty canes a year. The canes are in three colors, light brown, dark brown and black. They are all of the same size and of a sturdiness suitable for the semi-incapacitated one who has just graduated from crutches. His investment on crutches and canes is comparatively small but pays a handsome profit, even though the average druggist would hardly think that the demand for crutches and canes would be very considerable.

He does not carry a stock of elastic hosiery with the exception of elastic knee and ankle supports. The greater part of this business is on made-to-measure elastic hosiery which requires no investment. The customer comes to the store for measurements, the order is sent in to the factory, the elastic stocking is made and sent to the store in a few days' time; the sales average nearly \$10.00 and the profit is large.

The truss business is the largest of all and there are times when there are three or four people waiting to be fitted. The profits on abdominal supporters, elastic

hosiery, canes, crutches, trusses and related supplies amount to several thousand dollars annually.

There are to-day stores that specialize in analysis with gratifying results. This important type of professional work should not be attempted by the pharmacist who is not qualified to do it, but in instances where he is qualified he should be encouraged to engage in it.

Many stores that I have visited devote a show case to the display of enamel and glassware pertaining to the sick room. It is always attractive, and, to my mind, nothing else displayed in the drug store gives it the same professional atmosphere. Not only can this type of merchandise be sold in quantity and with profit, but it renders a distinct service to those who have to care for the sick at home, and they appreciate this service. On display these sick room supplies often call to the customer's mind many other sick room essentials to be purchased.

Theatrical make-up is an interesting and profitable side line related to the drug store. The art of make-up is extremely fascinating and in instances where the pharmacist makes a study of theatrical make-up he renders a service to the people of his community, many of whom are constantly engaging in amateur theatrical products. There is always considerable business in the line of theatrical make-up to be obtained from professional stage folk who, when directed to a certain drug store for such items, will invariably find themselves in need of many other drug store items.

Where a soda fountain forms part of the equipment of the drug store it is needless to say that cleanliness at the fountain should be of paramount importance. In instances where a luncheonette is maintained in connection with the fountain there is a service feature which it seems to me could be originated in a manner which would bring fame and fortune to the pharmacist who would incorporate it. I might even say that it would professionalize the luncheonette. To my knowledge it has never been attempted or, for that matter, even suggested. I refer to special diet luncheons for those millions who are either interested in gaining weight or reducing. The plan might not be practical to the drug store located in the small town but certainly it should be applicable to the store located in the small or the large city, particularly to a store located in a large building in the business or financial section of the large city.

Two popular-priced luncheons for the patron desiring to reduce and two for the one wishing to gain would undoubtedly suffice. Luncheons should be well-balanced and sufficient to maintain the health. They should be appetizingly prepared and served. Most important, they should be planned by a prominent dietician and this latter feature given much publicity and capitalized upon. This, I believe, would be a real service in the interest of public health, because it is quite generally known that many people have seriously injured their health by improper dieting. Again I repeat that the luncheons should be appetizing. I know of nothing more abominable than the average drug store sandwich.

Drug store deportment is an important consideration. I know of a store which was favored by a large patronage of high school students. The proprietor was the only pharmacist in the town who had graduated from the local high school. He had, in his high school days, played on the football team, and his interest in the school, its affairs and athletic victories or reverses, were perpetuated in later

years. He advertised in the school paper and the "Annual." Occasionally he was asked to address the students and he always responded. The high school purchased from his store its supplies of adhesive tapes, bandages, iodine, liniments, etc., for the athletic teams. He subscribed generously to everything pertaining to the school whenever he was approached. It followed that his store first enjoyed a good high school patronage, then it became a rendezvous and finally a "hang out" for high school students. He handled phonograph records in his store and had a phonograph upon which to demonstrate them. The day came when the moment the afternoon session at the high school was over, the students—male and female—came flocking to his store for sodas, frappés and entertainment. They were greeted and served by one or more of their classmates who were working behind the fountain. The students placed jazz records on the phonograph. Dainty slippers and heavy English brogues were soon tapping and shuffling to the irresistible strains of the jazz band. Prospective customers who came to the door were met with an astounding scene and noise; they paused and turned away. Fortunately for his business, this druggist discontinued selling phonograph records, and the phonograph disappeared from the store. High school patronage fell off somewhat, but the general business showed a marked increase.

The many problems involved in successfully conducting a retail drug store, although perplexing at times, make the drug business interesting. There is an irresistibility in connection with the drug business which fascinates and holds those engaged in it, and even though they often complain about it, they are loth to leave it.

KEEPING INDEPENDENT.*

BY EDWARD S. ROSE.

A much used, misused and abused term in the drug field to-day is the "independent druggist." It is much used, because big business especially is bending its efforts to interest in one way or another the independent druggist. The term is misused, because when a druggist has gone into the schemes that promise co-operation he is no longer independent. It is abused, because big business interests are continually promulgating propaganda to make the druggist believe his very existence depends on their coöperation.

What is the independent druggist to do? Will he become a part of this gigantic plan of jobber and manufacturer, who promise such willing coöperation to the end that the druggist will find his path in business a "bed of roses?" Perhaps the pendulum is swinging in that direction. It will continue to swing in that direction until the independent druggist sits down and clearly thinks it over. It seems to be the way of the world for us to be swept off our feet by some new movement, without giving it careful, earnest thought.

The writer will try to show how much and why our store out in Iowa is trying to be independent. For over fifty years we have avoided compromising alliances which might in some way impair our freedom of action and thought.

Turning to Webster we find that the word "independent" is defined as, "not dependent; free; not subject to control by others; not relying on others; not sub-

* Section on Commercial Interests, A. PH. A., Rapid City meeting, 1929.