

want them to think about such unpleasant things as sickness, accidents or injuries." And so the exploitation of bandages, gauze, cotton, etc., is taboo.

In taking this attitude, the druggist overlooks the fact that increased sale of this class of items would add to his reputation, prestige and profits. They are in reality "home needs," "home necessities," capable of a greatly extended use. While their use in caring for wounds and injuries is large, their use in the arts, the home, the shop and other walks of life is extending daily. For absorbent gauze or so-called "surgical gauze" there are a thousand uses in the ordinary paths of life entirely foreign to wound dressing. Many times more absorbent cotton is being used in the household and shop than in wound treatment. Beyond the medical and surgical uses of adhesive plaster lies a field of mechanical uses far exceeding all other forms of application, and seemingly unlimited. The agency of the retail druggist in the distribution of these items for surgical use stands to his credit. It is to be feared that he has not kept pace with their more modern uses. He has in a great measure allowed the trade to slip over to the dry goods store, the hardware dealer and the knick-knack shop.

The art of binding up a wound begins with primal man. Through the ages it has developed slowly, following the changes in civilization and the advancement of the surgical art. Certain forms of bandages and methods of application have been carried through the centuries. The trend of modern surgical practice is toward the simplification of bandages and dressings. The amount of material used per individual operation has notably decreased. This is balanced by the increase in the number of operations performed.

The embalmers and the barber surgeons were important factors in the development of surgical bandages. The apothecary or pharmacist, either when merged with the medical art or when separated from it, has been a factor in the preparation and application of surgical dressings. In modern times the rôle of the pharmacist is largely that of a distributor.

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## PUBLICITY AND THE PHARMACIST.\*

BY ALICE-ESTHER GARVIN.

The attitude of most pharmacists toward unfavorable publicity reminds me of the man who kept hitting himself on the head with a hammer because it felt so good when he stopped. We have emerged from the Victorian and early Georgian period of overweening modesty, and it would seem not only feasible but absolutely essential that the present-day pharmacist seek favorable publicity not only for his profession in general, but also for himself. The slogan, "Your pharmacist is more than a merchant" has been helpful, but we need more and more news about the individual druggist—about you men in this audience to-day. As Byron so aptly said,

"Words are things, and a small drop of ink  
Falling, like dew, upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think,"

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\* Section on Commercial Interests, A. P. H. A., Madison meeting, 1933.

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and we want the public to think about us, and to know of our accomplishments and exploits.

In the first place, we are living in a "hard-boiled" age. The reading public, with their senses dulled by a long period of disappointments, will not believe that the druggist is more than a merchant, nor that he is a professional man, nor that he is even a human being, unless these facts are brought forcibly and frequently to their attention through the medium of the most powerful force in the world—the columns of the public press. Let the attention of people be focused upon the important things being done in this workaday world by the local druggist; let them see his name, or his picture, or a photograph of his store. *No one* may be successful to-day without publicity, and certainly proof of that may be found in the President's campaign for national recovery; every daily paper in the country carries a news story from Washington, and, while I do not mean to imply that the average druggist means as much to a city editor as members of the Cabinet (even *I* am not so impertinent as to think that) *I do* mean that the average druggist may be a source of benefit to his profession, to himself, and to the circulation of the local paper, if he is willing to stay awake on sentry duty.

Every newspaperman is looking for news. I'm sure you've all heard the little poem addressed to them:

"So here's to the gallant reporters!  
The boys with the pencils and pads—  
Those calm, undisturbable, cool, imperturbable, nervy, inquisitive lads.  
Each time that we pick up a paper,  
Their marvelous deeds we should bless—  
Those bold, reprehensible, brave, indispensable, sensible lads of the Press."

I think it is not fallacious to assume, in this connection, that a professional man is stronger meat for headlines than one of the prehistoric Forgotten Men, and so, if a druggist is convicted of a law violation; or beats his wife; or substitutes one preparation for another; or is arrested for speeding; or is out of antitoxin and the child dies; or leaves his store "uncovered" while he is attending a convention or playing golf; or attends a stag party where the entertainment may be more or less questionable, the daily press may carry a glaring headline which will damn him seriously and permanently in the eyes of his customers. He suffers, his family suffers, and the profession of pharmacy is kicked down a few more stairs. If one druggist, or his clerk, fills a prescription incorrectly with dire results for the patient, the inevitable result will be a news item of irreparable damage to the man's reputation, a loss of public confidence in the store, and the maligning of the entire profession. We are a nation of generalizers. If a pharmacist is careless in the compounding of *one* prescription, (we think) he must be equally careless in the compounding of *all* prescriptions; and, by the same token, if *one* pharmacist is careless in the compounding of a prescription, *all* pharmacists must be careless. The average reader knows little of syllogisms.

To offset debacles of this type, we need publicity of a favorable nature; I wish it were possible to have in every paper, every day, an item about a pharmacist or pharmacy, so that we might gradually bring about a recognition of the druggist's value to his community. For example, this has been a legislative year, and many laws of benefit to public health have been enacted, through the efforts of the phar-

macists, in the several states. These should have been bruited about until every reader of every newspaper in every city, town and village was deeply cognizant of the work being done by his fellow townsmen. Copies of addresses made by speakers at conventions, or addresses made by local pharmacists, should be sent to the newspapers with a release-for-publication date; many pharmacists are doing research work in their laboratories—work of interest and value to the public—work that would make fine news stories; let the local papers be given an opportunity to tell them. Ofte a druggist is elected to public office, not necessarily concomitant to his profession, but possibly a civic office, or one in a club, fraternity or society. This would be of interest to his customers, as well as to the reading public, and might assure the readers that the pharmacist is a man of more or less prestige, socially or politically—that he is more versatile than would be indicated by his rapidity in filling capsules or making medicinal compounds. Not infrequently he may be honored by a college, or by a city, state or national organization, and, in that case, there should certainly be a news item, with headlines. Local and state organization meetings, banquets, *et al.*, should receive notice, as also outstanding articles by pharmacists that seem worthy of credit. The public should know about druggists, and should realize the qualities of those men whom they meet so impersonally every day. And I wish to state at this time that the newspaper will *not* know about you unless you yourself give the item. Most of us think the other fellow will take of publicity, but that other fellow is waiting for some one else to write the item or call the paper, and so a fine opportunity for favorable notice is lost. We have so much temerity in other respects that it seems almost incredible for us to be diffident in the matter of talking about ourselves to newspapermen, and it is this very excess of modesty that prevents us from having our names and our accomplishments before the eyes of the people who read.

At this point I wish to insert a plea to all men in the profession, urging them to write for pharmaceutical journals. There are scores of fine trade magazines in the states, with hundreds of thousands of readers. In a few cases, the editors may seek manuscripts, but they are eager to receive papers on any new or original ideas that you may have. It is a little old-fashioned to subscribe to the theory that if a man built a better mouse trap than his neighbor, the world would beat a track to his door. Nowadays that same mouse trap would require a full-page advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and two half hours a week on the National Broadcasting Company, with Rudy Vallee, Eddie Cantor, Burns and Allen, and Graham McNamee touting its superiority over all other mouse traps in the field. And so to-day we must rely upon our own initiative; if you have an idea for an article, don't wait for the editor to ask you for it—send it off to him at once before some one else writes, and receives credit for, the same story; nowadays editors aren't beating tracks to any one's door, possibly because they haven't any mice in the larder.

To return to the newspapers—one of the most important and widely read sections of the paper is the one devoted to human interest stories. Sometimes these are feature stories, while in other publications they are listed under news items. I refer to such articles as those describing a druggist, who, during the economic cataclysm, filled many prescriptions for the poor, and charged them nothing; the druggist who saved a life by administering the proper antidote; the druggist who

is interested in athletics and has donated a silver cup to the athletic association of the local high school; to the one who has prevented a suicide; to the one who has rushed an emergency case to the hospital in his own car; to the one who, for many years, has been quietly aiding families in need of charity. These human interest stories are occurring every day, but they do not reach the newspapers because the "other fellow" has forgotten. It is said that "names make the news;" pharmacists have good names, and make splendid material for copy, but an inherent modesty prevents them from notifying a paper.

At this point you are saying, "We have a publicity committee that takes care of our news items; why should we take the time to call up a newspaper office, or to visit a city editor, or to write an article and send it to a paper?" I will omit the axiom for adolescents, "If you wish a thing well done, you must do it yourself," and quote a sentence written by Francis Bacon in 1600, over three hundred years ago: "I hold that every man is a debtor to his profession, from which as men do, of course, seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they of duty to endeavor by way of amends to be a help and ornament thereunto." If every pharmacist in the United States were willing to be a help and ornament to his profession; if every pharmacist even once a year sent an article to the paper, or to the chairman of the publicity committee, the accumulation of favorable publicity would be far-reaching. It is the dilatory leaving of news to some one else that is so fatal to our aims.

Naturally, men not conversant with what is quaintly termed the "newspaper game" may be affronted at the occasional refusal, by a city editor or reporter, to accept an article submitted. We should remember that in the highly trained mind of the newspaperman there is a sharply defined line of demarcation between a news item and a bit of commercial advertising. Surely we know that a newspaper is kept alive by its advertising, and that advertising should be paid for. The managing editor of the *New Haven Register* said to me not long ago, when, as a matter of fact, I was seeking some publicity for the Connecticut druggists, "Druggists would resent having anyone come into the store, take merchandise from the shelves and walk off without paying for it, wouldn't they? Well, the pharmacist sells drugs and chemicals, and the newspapers sell space, and in both cases, legitimate service ought to be paid for." I quote that to lead up to the difference between *News* and *Advertising*. Advance notice of a banquet is *News*, a one-cent sale is *Advertising*; election to a civic office is *News*, advance notice of a sale of Christmas cards is *Advertising*; prevention of a suicide is *News*, the opening of a new store is *Advertising*. In the last analysis, I suppose we cannot hope to get something for nothing; my great personal hope is that we may get something for something. In some newspapers, publicity is gladly given, and even sought, for those pharmacists who have a daily advertisement in that paper. In others, any attempt to "steal" space is frowned upon. In the small town, the druggist may be his own press agent, and should know and respect the judgment of the men who conduct the papers; but he should frequently submit news about himself and his store. In the larger cities there is an almost insurmountable obstacle because of the wide variation of interests there; a reporter doesn't have to walk from house to house looking for something to happen in Los Angeles, Chicago or New York, and he may be loath to publicize the accomplishments of a mere druggist. How-

ever, the grade A papers of the country have, for the past five years, shown a tendency to minimize the glaring and sordid stories of murder, crime and sex, and to give more space to scientific news; that is, they wish to be social, rather than anti-social. This fact is in the pharmacists' favor.

I seem to be taking a most circuitous route in order to accomplish the end for which this paper was written. Most of you are probably asking, "So what?" as I reach the point, as you think I have said nothing which you did not previously know. It is axiomatically simple to be destructive in criticism, and gigantically difficult to offer, in this the Era of Codes, some constructive ideas which are workable and practicable. In outline form, the ones I should like to suggest are:

1. Favorable publicity is as essential for a successful pharmacist as national advertising is for the products he sells.

2. Newspapermen are always looking for news, and if you, or one of your fellow pharmacists, have done anything worthy of note, the local paper will be glad to print the item, but you should not wait for some one else to notify the press.

3. Unfavorable publicity cannot be curbed. "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interr'd with their bones." Druggists are human, after all, and will, therefore, continue to furnish fodder for the rocking chair brigade. But these unfavorable articles may be offset by a great number of favorable ones.

4. Send articles to your favorite pharmaceutical journals. These may not necessarily be of interest to the public, but they will be of interest and benefit to your fellow workers.

5. Every life, no matter how relatively simple, is a story; you, as pharmacists, have on your threshold the material for innumerable stories, if you choose to think of yourself as interpreter or motivating force; if you realize what an important entity you are in the great game of life.

6. In the large cities, there should be an active publicity committee, a sort of central clearing house, the chief agent of which might be a man who understands the drug business, and also knows advertising and newspaper work. There, with a unit effort toward combating the chain, toward high grade, expert service of a high standard, the committee, with this thought in mind, should be held responsible for the actual publication of favorable articles. I do not mean stealing space, but the writing of items of real interest to the readers, and not alone of personal benefit to the individual druggist. Every druggist should get in touch with this agent, who might serve as a liason officer between the pharmacists and the newspapers.

7. Names make the news. Determine to have your name, or your store or your profession, make some fine news as quickly as possible. May I suggest as a motto for the 1933-1934 pharmacist the following—

"What rage for fame attends both great and small!  
Better be damned than not mentioned at all."

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