

A PROFESSIONAL PHARMACY.*

BY ROBERT R. GAW.

The McKennan Pharmacy was founded in 1861. It was located for many years at 431 Market Street, Pittsburgh. In 1910, Mr. O. F. Wolf, who worked as a boy in the store and became registered before branching out for himself, purchased a half interest in the store, and in 1914 purchased the other half.

In 1914 the McKennan Pharmacy moved to its present location 506-508 Penn Avenue and at that time discontinued the sale of soda water, proprietary medicines, candy, tobacco and toilet articles. These items were discontinued with the idea of attempting to operate a professional pharmacy and devote our energies exclusively to prescriptions.

We mention these historical facts to better enable us to visualize the progress of this business and its evolution from an ordinary drug store to a professional pharmacy. Many druggists as well as physicians from a distance, who visit the store, are under the impression that it is one of recent birth and that it represents an idea capitalized by big interests, and launched over night like the sensational developments in commercial retail stores.

The McKennan Pharmacy as a professional pharmacy is a result of years of development and of a radical departure from the deeply rooted customs of a business long established as a commercial drug store. This evolution was a result of adopting a policy of extremes in eliminating many of the departments and classes of merchandise usually found in average drug stores. When the McKennan Pharmacy decided to omit such lines as proprietary medicines, candy, cigars, soda water, tooth brushes and all toilet articles, we did it at a single stroke, and made it our business to acquaint the physicians with this action. Our intention was to impress upon them the fact that we were determined to exert all of our efforts to give undivided attention to professional pharmacy, and to render a service to the profession which we felt we could not deliver without eliminating the commercial end of our business.

Personal contact is a material factor in building a professional pharmacy. It is necessary to keep in personal touch with the physicians as well as your customers. We are in constant contact with the members of the medical profession of Allegheny County and its environs, and also in touch with their patients as they come into the store.

Many practicing physicians are not familiar enough with the Pharmacopoeia and the simple pharmaceutical formulas. There is no easier way for a druggist, who is attempting to establish a professional pharmacy, to obtain the confidence of the physician than by impressing upon the physician's mind a knowledge of your profession.

We attribute our growth to the fact that the medical profession, as well as the public, appreciates the services rendered by a strictly professional pharmacy. We do no counter prescribing, nor do we fill any family recipes. We limit our activities to the compounding and dispensing of physicians' prescriptions and materials used by the physicians in their office practice. In addition, we supply sick-room necessities.

* Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing, A. Ph. A., Washington meeting, 1934.

Physicians are supplied with freshly distilled water gratis, which is greatly appreciated and although no immediate remuneration is received, their good-will and subsequent coöperation is noticeable.

Since adopting the policy we have before indicated, we have never hired any pharmacists. A boy enters the store as an errand boy and develops until of sufficient age to enter the school of pharmacy. If his preliminary education has not been sufficient, we supply him with the opportunity of adding sufficiently to his general education to enable him to enter the school of pharmacy, and then care for all his necessary expense in completing his pharmaceutical studies until he has passed the State Board. Hence our young men are always allied to, and enthusiastic for, the policy of the store. It is virtually bred in them. Through the adoption of this policy we have never lost one of our employees whom we have helped to educate.

Few organizations have a more enviable situation in this respect. There are four registered pharmacists at McKennan's, two always being on duty in the evenings and on holidays, and four on duty during the day. And yet McKennan's has not hired a pharmacist in fifteen years.

Commendation of our pharmacy by physician to physician and to patients, the personal interest they take in us, advertises us in a manner we could never accomplish through the daily press.

Any member of the profession of pharmacy who has learned its precepts and has practiced its ethics must clearly recognize the significant value of real professional service.

We do not think that the retrogressive motion so noticeable in the practice of pharmacy to-day is entirely the result of a lack of familiarity with the principles or ethics of the profession, but rather a desire to ignore these ethics because of the disposition of present-day drug stores to work along the lines of least resistance. They are influenced by the apparent prosperity of the commercial drug store, where the pharmacy department is relegated to an obscure corner of an institution which has all the earmarks of a variety shop or a miniature department store.

We expect within a short time to see an absolute separation of the professional pharmacy from the commercial pharmacy, with legislation covering each class as a separate institution.

The druggist who aspires to be a professional pharmacist should have all the information the physician should reasonably expect. Knowledge is the key-note of success in any line of endeavor, and the druggist who does not have complete knowledge of his profession cannot hope to make much impression on the members of the medical profession.

Professional pharmacies are developed only through hard work and careful study of the requirements of the physician and his patients. Unless you comply with these requirements, your pharmacy will always be an average drug store and the profession of pharmacy cannot number you among those who recognize the duty and responsibility of the profession.

It is true, in conducting a professional pharmacy, many specialties, such as Ampuls, Solutions, Stains, etc., put up by the various manufacturers, are sold on a close margin, but by rendering this service and making it possible for the physician to obtain them, he becomes familiar with your store, sends his prescription work there, and the volume of prescription business increases to the extent that it offsets

the loss in the sale of specialties many times. In other words, it is just a different form of advertising your business.

To-day more than ever before, we are trying to lead the drug store back to pharmacy.

A plate glass sign hanging over the prescription counter sets forth with admirable directness McKennan's merchandising policy:

PRESCRIPTIONS.

Purveyors to Physicians and their Patients only. We do not sell Patent Medicines, Tobaccos, Soda Water or Toilet Articles.	All Biologicals, Vaccines, Serums, Ferments, etc., are kept under Refrigeration—Ice Cooled.
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Unless you are sick, we have not anything to sell you. That has been the store's message to the public for nineteen years.

This generous policy was Mr. Wolf's idea and it is standing the test of time. On October 23, 1930, the McKennan Pharmacy suffered a great loss by Mr. Wolf's death after a lingering illness of thirty months. The writer, who was taken in as an errand boy by Mr. Wolf, wishes to pay tribute to his memory. We are doing our utmost to "Carry On" the institution which his idealism so firmly established.

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PHARMACY.*

BY AQUILLA JACKSON.¹

I suppose there is no more accurate way of describing the drug store than to refer to it as a professional-commercial institution. No matter how ethical it is or how extensive its professional service, there is always the commercial side to be considered. In other words, a sound business foundation must underly the store in all of its departments and branches.

I believe this conception of the drug store is sound and fully consistent with the high purpose it is to serve. The difficulty is, too many pharmacists have lost their sense of proportion and have sought to develop the drug store as a commercial institution only. This practice has been carried to shocking extremes. Every conceivable kind of merchandise has come into the drug store; it has become the subject of ridicule and criticism. This, to me, is simply a public interpretation—that the pharmacist is little short of a fool in his extreme commercial practices.

Several years ago, in fact early in 1930, the firm represented by the writer conceived the idea that it could render better pharmaceutical service by separating the business of the store into two divisions, one professional and confined to prescriptions, drugs and medicines and the closely and directly related side-lines, and the other, consisting of the soda fountain, cigar and candy departments, magazines, etc. Fortunately, we had plenty of space.

The large store room was divided by a partition reaching to the ceiling. At each end were archway openings, permitting free access from room to room. Two

* Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing, A. P. H. A., Washington meeting, 1934.

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