

FORESIGHT IN PROFESSIONAL PHARMACY.*

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INTRODUCTION.

It is unfortunate that pharmacy as a profession has been overshadowed by too much emphasis on the commercial aspects. This encroachment has submerged the dignity of pharmacy and has brought ridicule from allied professions. The problems of a profession concern every member of the profession. It is imperative that all pharmaceutical organizations take heed of this condition and take steps to remedy the situation.

The reputation and prestige of pharmacy among the respected professions is at stake and it depends materially on the training the future pharmacist receives whether pharmacy can cope with present-day demands. This training entails a broad foundation of general knowledge as well as intensified specialization coupled with an abundance of practical apprenticeship in an ethical pharmacy. This apprenticeship should be the culmination of a constructive, coöperative, not competitive, program, between institutions and practicing pharmacists.

Professional experience obtained in the prescription department of an ethical pharmacy has no substitute. Schools and colleges which do not, or cannot, establish a coördinating relationship with health service dispensaries are handicapped in perfecting this vital experience which is an essential prerequisite for the educated pharmacist.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE PHARMACIST TO THE MEDICAL SCIENCES.

Efficient medical service is the key-note pursued actively by the medical profession. Professional pharmacy constitutes an integral part in the efficient functioning of medicine and, as such, has a very definite and responsible duty to perform in the Nation's health program. In order to fulfil these obligations effectively, a pharmacist should endeavor to excel in both the theory and practice of his profession.

Functions of the Pharmacist.—As the custodian of medicines, the functions of the pharmacist are many-fold:

1. The dispensing pharmacist has the responsibility of preparing, compounding and dispensing with efficiency and dispatch.
2. He must assure purity and quality of the products used. This involves a comprehensive knowledge of the medicinal substances prescribed.
3. He must be thoroughly familiar with all modern remedies and their therapeutical virtues which require a knowledge of synthetic chemicals, biological products and a fundamental acquaintance with scientific research.
4. He must be acquainted with proper methods of standardizing as well as with specific means of storage to retain stability. This is necessary because many of the products are complex and delicate compounds which require special care.
5. He is the final distributor of medicinal products for the sick. This requires strict professional integrity, and is a duty which cannot be undertaken lightly.

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An adequate knowledge of, and ability in, the above, will help a practicing pharmacist to be of invaluable service to the physician and to the community in which he is practicing. The care with which he attends to these details will do a great deal toward elevating the respect of pharmacy as a profession.

The Hospital Pharmacist.—The duties of the hospital pharmacist are two-fold:

1. Functioning as a competent pharmacist.
2. Acting as a scientific "information bureau" to the hospital medical staff and nurses.

It is a vital necessity for every large hospital (in order to insure proper control of medical supplies) to maintain an adequate dispensary supervised by a competent pharmacist. Because of his fundamental training and practical experience, the hospital pharmacist should possess a background of knowledge which will enable him, or her, to contact the medical staff with professional confidence. This qualification can be attained by keeping abreast of the latest scientific developments in the fields of medicine and pharmacy. This is a paramount issue for the dispensing pharmacist. Reading is a potent factor.

PHARMACEUTICAL EDUCATION.

The proper prescription for training future pharmacists includes a study and recognition of the increasing needs and demands of the public as well as keeping abreast of current pharmaceutical and medical advances. Intensified efforts to constructively develop the mental abilities and capacities of selected students in the direction of professional ideals is a paramount duty of our institutions, thus informing and developing the profession of pharmacy as to growing responsibilities. The social and educational problems must go forward hand in hand.

Proper training of the pharmacist in compounding and dispensing involves not only adequate instruction in fundamentals which are available in recognized institutions, but also practical experience (apprenticeship) in ethical prescription stores, hospitals or public dispensaries.

These latter facilities, however, are not always available should the college or school be remotely located from populated regions of the country. In those institutions which do not have access to the proper channels for practical experience, special courses may be developed to supplement the natural environments to obtain this fundamental professional experience.

A number of schools maintain "model drug stores" for instructional purposes, primarily for the development of the commercial phases of the drug business. These stores have become invaluable adjuncts for the inexperienced student. In addition to giving the student commercial training, these "model drug stores" could also be used for training in the professional side of pharmacy. The prescription department of these stores could be used as a true basis for professional training in prescription compounding. It need not be operative from a dispensing viewpoint in order to be useful, hence would not be competitive. This department should be stocked with medicinal products currently prescribed by the practicing physicians. The students could make a survey of local operating drug stores and make a study of current prescriptions with the objective in view of keeping a proper stock in the prescription department of the "model drug store." This phase of the store could then be correlated with the respective courses in operative pharmacy where the

student has an opportunity to prepare and study the various classes and types of preparations commonly prescribed by the medical profession.

The use of the "model drug store" for practice in both commercial and professional pharmacy would be valuable preparation for a student's apprenticeship in an actual situation and would be a means of showing the student the true relationship between commercial and professional pharmacy. The method suggested would also give the student an opportunity to get first-hand information on drugs which are in constant use and which are used only rarely; this would be valuable from a practical standpoint.

It is imperative that the schools give a standard of instruction that will prepare the future pharmacist to be resourceful and competent to meet the demands of the medical profession and the advances of research. Without this objective professional pharmacy cannot long endure. This means a better understanding and recognition of the present-day needs.

The elevation of the standards of pharmaceutical education in the United States during the past twenty years has been phenomenal. Practically the entire effort has been concentrated on undergraduate pharmaceutical training, the quality of which now compares favorably with that of any country.

In the majority of communities the ratio of pharmacists to the population is too high. The rate of increase in the profession continues greater than the rate of increase in the population. The great need of the country is for better, not more, pharmacists, and for opportunities by which those in practice and those who are qualified can prepare themselves adequately for their responsibilities to the public.

AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION AT THE TEXAS CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION, DALLAS.

A recent issue of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce states that six national conventions will send more than 1000 members of the pharmaceutical profession to Dallas during the TEXAS CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION, which opens June 6th.

Of especial interest to the profession will be the medical and health display in the United States Building. This exhibit will be placed by the Federal Government at a cost of some \$40,000.00. Elaborate displays of private corporations showing the latest in pharmaceutical equipment, supplies and methods, will be found in the Hall of Varied Industries on the CENTENNIAL grounds. In addition there will be interesting exhibits of other kinds throughout the grounds.

Meeting simultaneously during the month of August, the half dozen parleys will draw members from all parts of the country. Nationally prominent speakers will take an active part in the business meetings.

Dallas pharmacists are planning many special events and amusements for visitors and their families. These include sporting and social events, as well as visits to the EXPOSITION itself.

Meetings scheduled are those of the National Conference of Pharmaceutical Association Secretaries; National Conference of Pharmaceutical Research; American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy; National Conference of Pharmaceutical Law Enforcement Officers; National Association of State Boards of Pharmacy; Plant Science Seminar and the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

Definite dates for the sessions will be announced later.
