

## HOW CAN THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACY BEST HELP THE STUDENT TO SECURE AN APPROPRIATE COMMERCIAL TRAINING? \*

BY WILLIAM C ANDERSON.

The college of pharmacy that is founded on right principles will always have as its chief objects the stability and elevation of pharmacy and the conservation of the public health and welfare.

The stability of pharmacy depends to a great extent upon the proficiency, inclination, and character of those who are to perform its delicate and important duties, their ability to successfully meet the varying conditions in professional and commercial life, and the character of the service to the physician and the public.

The elevation of pharmacy will proceed as the college graduate, thoroughly equipped to render the most exacting, scientific, and accurate service under all circumstances involving the preparation, keeping, and distribution of drugs, stimulated with a high regard for his chosen profession and trade, and fortified by a keen realization of his obligations and responsibilities, recognizes its ideals and in his daily practice conscientiously strives to reach them.

The conservation of public health and welfare is the most vital problem which mankind has to face to-day, for activity ceases, enterprise fails, hope vanishes, and the brightest prospects are dispelled when health leaves.

The pharmacist's position in this respect is such that there is required the most intimate knowledge of the weapons by means of which the object can be obtained, accuracy in manipulation that safeguards every possibility of error and disaster, and a clear perception that engenders and fosters highest efficiency.

### COLLEGE OF PHARMACY MUST PREPARE STUDENTS TO MEET ALL REQUIREMENTS.

The college of pharmacy, then, in carrying out its objects, must prepare the student to meet all of these requirements and thus be in a position to successfully and effectually carry on the work of his choice.

These requirements are so closely allied that one cannot be separated from the others without weakening, if not destroying, the whole.

The knowledge of drugs without the knowledge that will enable one to properly handle and combine them would be of little use to the pharmacist, and thorough knowledge both of the drugs and methods of manipulation would be dangerous in the possession of one who did not appreciate their dangers and activities, their uses and misuses.

Still, with all these requirements fulfilled, we find ourselves facing the fact that, with all his technical knowledge, professional skill, and high character, the college-trained man has but produced something that is practically useless until he enters the field of commerce and places it within the reach of the consumer. Commercial training, then, must of necessity form an important link in the chain of pharmaceutical knowledge.

### EVERY PROFESSION HAS ITS COMMERCIAL SIDE.

I am aware of the fact that linking commercialism with professionalism is frowned upon by many in other professions and by some in the ranks of pharmacy,

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and, while it is conceded there is a danger-line in such connection that should carefully be avoided, that every profession has its commercial side cannot be denied; in fact, if it were not for the commercial advantages secured through a profession, many of our professional schools would soon close their doors on account of insufficient applicants for their degrees.

There may be some instances where the desire to continue a family record or noble impulse of the benefit one might be to his fellow-man has been the incentive to enter a profession, but in the great majority of cases I venture to predict that the one impelling motive was the thought of the means of earning a livelihood.

I believe the commercial side of a profession influences the standing of that profession, for the greater the financial success the easier high ideals may be established and maintained.

#### THE COMMERCIAL TRAINING OF THE PHARMACIST.

The commercial side of some professions consists principally of selling service and keeping accounts, and the commercial training required can be regulated accordingly.

The practice of pharmacy, however, usually entails extensive merchandising, and the commercial training of the pharmacist must be such as will enable him to protect his interests in every instance.

In addition to buying and selling goods, the conduct of his business involves the purchase or rental of real estate, banking, contracts, handling negotiable paper, etc., all of which requires a general knowledge of commercial law.

Attracting and keeping trade through advertising or other methods, the care of stock and its attractive display, treatment of customers and system in business are all important factors in the every-day work of the drug store.

The unsatisfactory conditions complained of by some retail druggists and the total failure of others are, in many instances, the result of deficiency in commercial knowledge, lack of appreciation of its importance to business success, or failure to properly apply one's knowledge and opportunities.

Too many retail druggists estimate their success by the amount of daily, monthly, or yearly sales. Increased expenses, higher prices for goods, and, in the absence of an inventory, which is a most general condition, reduction of stock are given little, if any, consideration.

The rapidity with which a business conducted under such deceptive conditions can be undermined and destroyed must be apparent to all and leaves the impression that in these days of rigid competition and changing business conditions, more than ever before, commercial training of the pharmacist and the rigid application of that training by him are most essential.

Losses through making contracts, signing legal documents, indorsing notes, and similar procedure have not been infrequent in our line of business, and such losses can frequently be traced to lack of appreciation of the responsibility assumed in each instance, and such lack of appreciation to ignorance concerning the simple principles of commercial law.

#### COMMERCIAL TRAINING MUST BE PART OF THE COLLEGE COURSE.

If, then, commercial training is a necessary requirement for the pharmacist, the college of pharmacy that would live up to its principles and do its whole duty has no alternative in the matter; excuses and evasion cannot be tolerated; it must include commercial training of its students as a part of its course of instruction.

It will not be surprising if there are found colleges of pharmacy or departments of pharmacy connected with some of our universities that will view this subject from a different standpoint and contend that the work of the college should be confined to professional training, and that commercial training should be a part of the experience secured through drug-store practice.

While not well founded, this contention should open the eyes of the pharmacists of the country to the fact that our colleges and departments of pharmacy are gradually separating into two classes:

One regards drug-store experience and training as insignificant, when compared with regents' counts, as a foundation for the study of pharmacy, and has as the chief aim the preparation of highly scientific men with earned degrees and counts that will enable them to reach out into still higher attainments and professions.

The other, while fully appreciating the value of a good preliminary education as a stepping-stone to advanced study, ever recognizes drug-store experience as essential to complete pharmaceutical training and has as its aim the thorough preparation of pharmacists for pharmacy.

Unless indications are misleading, the time is not far distant when pharmacists and boards of pharmacy will have to decide which of these classes is conserving the best interests of pharmacy and which is entitled to recognition.

The commercial training required by the pharmacist is so varied in its character, the college of pharmacy cannot hope to cover every phase of it in a thoroughly practical way.

Some of such training cannot be completed except by personal contact with customers; as, for instance, the sale of goods and general conduct incident thereto.

The teaching of commercial training, however, does not differ, to a great extent, from the teaching of other subjects that form an important part of the college curriculum, for the facts and principles taught and the practical exercises pursued can but serve as a safe and substantial foundation for that perfection in art and professional practices that can only be reached through practical application of the knowledge secured and repeated performance of the processes and methods involved.

The college of pharmacy can and should instruct its students in the proper and successful conduct of the drug store as constituted to-day.

This instruction should include buying and selling and the necessary transactions with reference to the same that affect the profits, contracts, and the rights and obligations of each party thereto, as well as different forms and characters of contracts, quality of goods purchased, quantity, buying, rebates and discounts, bills of lading, bills of sale, bills of exchange, receipts and discharges should all be given particular consideration.

The care and display of stock, window dressing, service, treatment of customers, handling accommodations and accounts, and system in business should be dealt with in such a way as to impress the student with their importance and induce him to adopt up-to-date and advantageous methods with reference to the same.

Instruction and practical work in book-keeping that will enable him to at least keep accurate and complete accounts with those with whom he does business and a correct record of his personal business affairs is absolutely necessary.

Correspondence, insurance in all its different forms, property, both real and personal, banking, mortgages, bonds, notes and deeds, with points of law bearing upon the same, should be given the attention their importance demands.

In fact, the course in a college of pharmacy, to be complete, must prepare the graduate to enter upon his life's work fully equipped to avoid the snares of business life, conduct a drug store in a successful manner, and give to the public most acceptable and beneficial service.