

come into favor in recent years particularly as of value in irritated and inflamed conditions of the bladder.

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THE APPEARANCE OF A PACKAGE AND ITS CONTENTS AS A FACTOR
 IN MERCHANDIZING.*

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When a stranger is introduced to us, we usually form an opinion of his or her general qualities, as a result of impressions made by the individual and recorded by our various senses. As the impressions made through our sense of sight are the easiest recorded and remembered, it is quite logical that first impression is based largely on appearance, hence the saying "clothes make the man." While such first impressions are not always correct, the value of making them favorable is generally recognized.

Similarly should we cause the first impression of merchandise to be favorable, for it is daily introduced, so to speak, to many customers and people coming into or passing the store. They make its acquaintance through the medium of windows, show-cases, or the personal introduction by the salesmen. On making the proper first impression depends to a large degree the volume of new business that can result from the display or showing of goods and when such goods are your own this impression frequently forms the basis by which you and your store are judged. In few lines of business is appearance of more importance than in ours, for quality is not always a visible attribute, especially not in the various medicinal preparations, drugs and chemicals usually packaged by the retailer and daily sold on demand over the counter. It is in these preparations that the character of the Pharmacy

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dispensing them is most evident. Yes, reputations have been both made by the careful attention to, and unmade by the neglect of this point.

It is much more difficult than would appear to most of us, to notice any imperfections in our own products. We are not placed in the position of drug store customers enough to get the right viewpoint, and it is especially difficult to enter our own stores and see things as they are seen by the public. We are too familiar with it; we are so used to seeing that we don't see. What other people notice without effort requires our close attention, and a critical eye.

For the purpose of illustrating the principal thought of this paper, let me describe three articles recently purchased in a drug store; they were a 2-oz. bottle of Spirit of Camphor, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Tincture of Iodine, and a dozen 2-grain Quinine capsules. The Spirit of Camphor had a slight sediment in it, just a bit of dust and such foreign particles as are normally carried into it by the camphor. The bottle was the usual prescription oval stoppered with an ordinary regular length cork; the latter, however, was difficult to remove, for it had been driven in too far, only about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch protruding from the neck and this at a decided angle to one side. The label read "*Spts. Camphor*;" it squared better with angle of the cork than with the bottle, and had evidently been slid over the bottle in moist condition, as a streak of paste was visible below the label. The dust of several days' standing had accumulated on the lip of the bottle and the whole appearance was further marred by a price mark in large blue-pencil figures across the label.

The Tincture of Iodine bottle was fitted with too small a cork, permitting the Iodine to come between the neck and cork to within about one-eighth inch of the lip. The label was a regular shop label but a trifle too large for such a small bottle, the upper portion of it being creased somewhat to make it lay down on the shoulder of the bottle. Finger marks of bluish tint indicated that the person applying it had had Iodine on his fingers.

The Quinine capsules were dispensed in a square telescope box with rather loose fitting lid, just loose enough to make the body of the box fall out after the package had been raised about six inches. The capsules themselves seemed to be a home-made product on which the errand boy or apprentice had put in his spare time without requisite supervision. They showed considerable irregularity in filling and a good detective would have found no difficulty in identifying the individual who had handled them, by the finger prints which perspiring hands had left. The box was labeled with the usual stock label having a large white space at the top and a small imprint giving the name of the store at the bottom, and on this white space appeared "2 gr. Quinine Caps." in lead pencil writing.

I doubt if you will have to draw on your imagination to visualize the trio just described; your memory will probably recall drug store packages fitting the description given.

How much more would the customer think of its quality had the Spirit of Camphor been filtered, and how much better would be the first impression if the cork was of proper length, straight, and not driven too far into the bottle? How valuable would be the evidence of care shown by a straight and correct label and clean bottle? The paste or mucilage could have been removed with a wet

cloth before the bottle was put in stock and the lip could have been protected by a paper cap so that dust could not have lodged at this particular point.

We all know how Iodine will corrode a cork. If you have ever had a cork stoppered bottle of Iodine that had been in the house for some time, tip over on a nicely white enameled shelf in your bathroom, you will realize how much damage can be done by a corroded cork. Would it not be better to use a rubber stopper and prevent such annoying accidents for your customers?

The cheapest help can fill Quinine capsules providing it is carefully instructed. Capsules unevenly filled, bearing finger marks, or traces of Quinine on the outside are not a particularly good advertisement.

A box with a properly fitted cover or lid is no more expensive than one with a poorly fitting lid; it is just a question of proper attention at the time of purchase. The label, too, could be improved by having it typewritten or printed, and adding directions as to how often and how many may be taken.

The Spirit of Camphor label previously referred to is a relic of the time when printing houses knowing nothing about Pharmacy constructed the labels for the druggist. Unnecessary abbreviations on labels should be avoided, incorrect titles are inexcusable, and bad English in their reading matter will hardly serve to prove our being professional men.

When you get back to your stores, just look over your stock of shop labels. I am sure most of you can find on them some statements that you never knew existed. Some years ago I found a quantity of Tincture of Nux Vomica labels in use which gave an antidote that would properly have fitted for a Tincture Opium label, a rather serious error.

In dispensing liquids generally, it is a good policy to filter them, even such things as Olive Oil, Turpentine, and certain liquids which are intended for technical purposes should be filtered before being bottled. While in many cases, it may not make the product any better, it will improve its appearance and thereby leave a better impression with your customer. A little care and judgment exercised in corking bottles will work wonders as will also the use of a moist cloth on the finished package and labels placed straight and at uniform height. If any price marks are necessary, they should not mar the label. Price stickers are inexpensive and make a package look much better and if paced at the bottom of the bottle, do not remind the customer continuously of the money spent. Let him forget the price and remember the quality. The convenience of the customer should be considered in designing or selecting the package for any article. A viscid liquid in a narrow mouthed bottle or a hygroscopic salt in a paper container will only serve to vex your customer and make him try another store.

One could go on indefinitely with descriptions of improper packages and enumerate many little points that should be observed, but what has been said is sufficient to convey the idea that you may find some food for thought by carefully scrutinizing packages from your own and other stores. Make the appearance of both package and contents an ad and asset for your store by studying their qualities and faults from every angle and then make the changes you deem necessary. I am not advocating extravagance. One can often create a great improvement in the appearance of both package and product without expense.
