

Drug Clerks' Column.

Felicitatem Adversus Gradus.*

GRUFFS FOR THE DRUG CLERKS OF ONTARIO.

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I daresay that the majority of the drug clerks of the province are at this present time in an almost similar predicament to my own about six months or a year ago. I was just about then eagerly anticipating the time when I should be liberated from the *bondage* of apprenticeship and could enter upon a more lucrative and enjoyable course of existence, and in the not very distant future become what is the aspiration of all in any way ambitious youths, my own boss (although I am forced to admit the prospects of having such an employer were not at all of an enviable character). Green fields are pleasant far away, and of the pastures of bliss my too vivid imagination had an exceeding abundance. But there are a few things we mortals are in a position to learn as we advance upon life's pathway. And my turn was yet to come, and that at no far distant season.

I had never for a moment thought of associating my apprenticeship life with the interests of our province's College of Pharmacy, because I was content to leave had enough alone, and to take my medicine of school life as a druggist only can (in capsules) when it should become incumbent upon me to attend the deliberations of the institution of learning which was to attempt to fit me out in the garb of pharmacy. But my apprentice days coming to a fulfilment, and the next consequent step for me being the attending school, I attended this last fall's junior session of our own Ontario college, and I there learned a few lessons which have been of profit to myself, and which I feel may be worth a little to my fellow drug clerks. And so I beg indulgence of them whilst I bring to their notice the product of my observations.

I feel strongly convinced of the circumstance that most of our drug clerks never cast a thought about their connection with our college at Toronto until they are brought into direct contact with it by an attendance upon its course of tuition and training. The clerks never get to feel that they are prospectively as intimately connected with the school as are those who are from year to year attendant upon its sessions. It is absolutely certain that no man can enter the drug business as a business in this Ontario of ours until he has been graduated from the college supposed to train him up in the way he should go in his pharmaceutical life in the province. And so the boy going into the business ought to appreciate fully what is before him and govern himself accordingly. Far too many young fellows squander their time in the store, do nothing toward getting

ready for school work, fail to avail themselves of the facilities and influences for study extended them, and go down to Toronto perfect ignoramuses, sufficiently wrapped up in their own powers to harp Æolian music to that providence their ignorance describes as "luck" as that they hope, and even expect, they will pass through examinations and come out as full-fledged druggists, and be able to take their places among the business men of the province as fit representatives of a business into which they have gained access by the skin of their teeth, and very little skin at that. Well, there may be something so striking about these young men as to commend them extraordinarily favorably to their examiners, but I don't believe their hash will prove half so digestible when they come to eat it. It is generally found each May that those who fail on the council examinations are the men who did not think it worth their while to get a little bit prepared for the work of the course before entering upon it. These are the ones who usually get left. Now, the work at school will not be such an extreme burden to him who has prepared himself before and during the course in some measure for it. There is certainly lots of work to get up, but honest application and perseverance can surmount all barriers, and he who earnestly does his best to get up the work will not find the getting of it up such an onerous task after all.

But there are a few things it will not be amiss for each of us to get an insight into ere we attempt to try our skill at the storing our minds with the knowledge of pharmaceutical book lore. And these we might just for a few minutes take a glance at:—

I. A clerk before attending school should train his mind to a system of study.

At the Ontario College of Pharmacy, as at all others, they do not profess to be able or to attempt to *learn* any man the theories of pharmacy; they only *teach*. No person can regulate the mind of another, none can influence his fellow's powers of thought and mental grasp. To assert and exert themselves, each man must look after his own mental character. And I noticed this circumstance very markedly displayed in my recent experience at school. Some fellows could not apply themselves at all to study, could not get their minds into working trim, could not bring their talents to bear upon their required exercises, and, of course, these men could not but lose through this deficiency of power. It is a very pleasant way of looking at matters, I fully realize, this of considering that while in the store as an apprentice a fellow can afford to let studies run and can allow himself to neglect attention to his books altogether; but I also now from experience realize every bit as fully that this way of looking at the situation is a hood-wink and a dangerous snare. A man's mind needs to be prepared for thinking, and, unless it be prepared, all the knowl-

edge of all the sages the world has ever known will never sprout forth into usefulness from this mind, because the soil is no good, has never been cultivated. I believe that if the clerks of Ontario would only get to realize what they are losing by not paying a little attention to study while in the store, they would stir themselves a little bit in this matter. There are lots of little things each clerk can learn before entering school which he would find would save him a lot of trouble on going to school, and which I know would be of great service to those who are to tutor him. Almost any fellow while in the store can get up the *doses* of drugs and preparations of the Pharmacopœia, can study up the ways of preparing official medicaments, can get up the process of determining specific gravity of substances, and can know a little bit about the metric system of weights and measures, and that table in the front of "Marsch's Materia Medica." This is very little to have to study for four years, but if properly gone at will be of profit to him who attempts it. And then in the college announcement will be found a course of study for apprentices, drawn out by the council of the college, which may well be given the serious consideration of the clerks of our province. This table was not made out just for amusement, it was fixed up for your profiting, brother clerk.

II. A clerk needs to form proper habits of going about his work.

There is nothing so disgusting and distasteful to any person of refinement than a man who is slovenly, and who does not know how to correctly and expeditiously go about his business, and the Professor of Pharmacy at the O.C.P. is not a man of vulgar imitations, not by any means, as many neglectful clerks have found and will yet find out. Any man who is clean and particular himself likes to see the same qualities in others. But there are lots of people in this world of ours who are exceedingly dirty in their methods of work, and who, besides this, never use their common sense to direct them how to go about their business.

Some clerks in their works show this lack of skill to a very, very marked extent. In making pills they too often make more pill *mess* than pill *mass*, a terrible slabber all over the whole of their utensils; in making powders, the powders are more often spread upon the dispensing counter than upon the necessary papers. These clerks more often dispense with the powders than they dispense them. And in their other operations they are equally unskilled. They never think for a minute what ought to be done under a given circumstance, and how this ought to be done. They never use their thinking caps at all.

Now, no school professes to be able to make a man of any fellow. They don't, at school, supply a man with character, only with aids to the framing of this.

These two thoughts came forcibly to me during my connection with our school

*Steps towards success.