

PHARMACEUTICAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION.

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Sixteen years is probably about the average (and in my opinion should be the minimum) age at which a boy enters a drug store for the purpose of learning a combination of a business and a profession, the qualifications which make for success in which are, in very many respects, decidedly unique. He is expected as a rule to do the work of a character required to be done by a grocer's or a butcher's boy; yet he is supposed to have an education above the average and has to enter badly handicapped on a lengthy course of study. His hours are necessarily long—the early closing by-laws are not for him—even on Sundays and holidays his stint is demanded of him. I have said he is supposed to have an education above the average, and so he would if a thorough knowledge of the work laid down in the curriculum of the Association were demanded of him. If a high standard of pharmaceutical education is to obtain in Manitoba the beginning must be made by requiring proper qualification on the part of the candidate before registering him as a certified apprentice. If before being allowed to start his pharmaceutical training he is compelled to pass his examination, and such a one as shall prove that he really has been studying, not merely cramming for a few weeks, it will go far towards securing a student possessed of a grounded habit of study. Unless he does possess this habit we all know what happens when his evening off comes. Then his mind naturally does not turn to study and if from a sense of duty he overcomes his desire to go out and amuse himself, and instead takes down his books, the chances are that he will do a little desultory reading and after becoming thoroughly muddled, either go to sleep or start in on something more congenial to his taste. The total result being unmethodical and spasmodic efforts not to learn but to get together sufficient scraps of knowledge to

enable him to get through his examination somehow.

That in the past our certified apprentice has not had the qualifications which he should possess I am quite confident and I am sure that examiners of the Association will agree with me that there has been abundant evidence in the papers they have examined in the shape of spelling which sometimes could not even be classified as phonetic—the lack of ability to express himself intelligently, and as for his arithmetic, a question involving only a rudimentary knowledge of mathematics, has seemed to produce profound cerebral inertia.

The Council of the Association require that he shall pass a satisfactory examination on physics. During my experience as a teacher I have repeatedly found that his ideas about the simplest natural phenomenon were of the vaguest character—even the rise and fall of the barometer has been as Greek to him.

The question is how to remedy this state of affairs. I have already indicated the cause and I am satisfied that if the members of the Association refused to have a boy in the store until he had passed his examination it would in the end be better for all concerned.

I have heard it urged that if the standard of entrance were raised there would be a difficulty, particularly in country districts, in obtaining apprentices. Surely this must be a mistake. If for a moment you consider the very large number of students attending the high school and university to-day and the overcrowding of the professions, you cannot believe it possible that difficulty will be met with in obtaining boys with fair education to recruit your ranks.

I will not dwell longer on this part of the subject for I have a few words to say with reference to the course of the apprentice after starting on his work proper. Supposing him to be equipped with a good preliminary education, how best can he make use of his time? At the start his work is anything but interesting and often decidedly menial, but necessary