

Optical Department.

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The Mistakes of the Graduate Optician.

A not inconsiderable experience both as teacher and consultant for many graduate opticians has forcibly demonstrated frequent errors which might easily be avoided if a common amount of thought, sense and conscience were exercised in the practice of a refractionist. To premise, let me not be misunderstood as a self-constituted critic and fault-finder and thus misjudged in my intent. My only desire is to point out what seems to me would be the better eradicated from the life of an optician.

I hardly expect all will agree with me, neither do I ask them so to do, as each one has as much right to his opinion as I have. Being personally convinced that my position is well taken is my reason for saying some things which may only serve the purpose of making myself disliked. I say this advisedly, for an article I wrote some months ago in the *Canadian Optician* on "Doctor of Optics" was considered by each of three opticians in this city as a personal attack on them. The fact was that I did not know that two of them were so distinguished at all and the whole three of them were foreign to my mind while writing the article in question. A preacher or a teacher can hardly say anything in the way of discussion of any subject without hitting some one but those who are so thin-skinned should neither attend church nor read articles in a sectional publication.

The individual optician is not thought of or being dealt with at all in the discussion of any subject which pertains to opticians in the aggregate. That individual applications can or will be made is another question altogether, and the responsibility thereof remains with them a personal equation.

Having thus explained my position and intention, it remains simply to point out what seems to me are "mistakes of graduate opticians."

(1) *Assumption of superior knowledge* is placed as the first mistake because it is the most prevalent and prominent, and I can hardly resist saying, the most impudent. But if fifty graduate opticians who make claim to superior knowledge were selected from all over Canada, I

doubt if the excellency of one over another, all things considered, would be awarded by any one competent to judge. Indeed, experience has taught that a green though apt student who does not know a convex from a concave glass may by two or three weeks' tuition be theoretically the peer of them all, and in a few weeks more actually so in practical work. If I were called upon to select the most competent optician in this city I would not seek the loudest boasters to find him, but resort to a little shop on a side street, where he is doing careful and correct



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work, although only appreciated by his intimate acquaintances and pleased patrons. He makes no claim to "superior knowledge," but he does make every effort to become thoroughly efficient, and his very modesty makes you like him.

The best of opticians makes so many mistakes and fails to please so many customers that one has an enormous amount of nerve to "blow his own horn" so as to drown the noise of all the others. If any optician thinks "he knows it all" he can very quickly be undeceived in his error by submitting himself for examination in theoretical questions and practical work on difficult cases.

2. *It is a mistake to refract customers*

in the presence of strangers. Many people do not like to be observed while undergoing the test at all—others are made nervous by intruding eyes, while all appreciate a reasonable amount of privacy—and a delicacy of environment is the right of each patron.

3. *It is not preferable to illumine the test type by daylight.* The variableness of sunlight is so well known that to remedy the defect the better opticians employ some form of good artificial light to produce constancy of illumination.

4. *It is a mistake to aid the customer to correctly name the letters.* You may be asked: What is that letter? Or did I name them right, etc.? Your innate disposition to be courteous should not spoil your effort to obtain the very thing

you are after, viz., to obtain the acuteness of vision. By a little evasion and clever manipulation you can appear to answer their questions but all the time make them "work out their own salvation," etc.

5. *It is false economy to use a trial frame which you cannot adjust and keep adjusted to the position in front of your patron's face that you desire.* Opticians with old trial cases are apt to have antiquated trial frames which never were any good and are a constant nuisance. "You cannot do good work with poor tools." The newest completely adjustable trial frame leaves nothing to be desired, and with them you can always rely upon the patient looking through the optical centre of the glass during the test.

6. *It is a mistake to carry on a conversation with your customer during the test.* The customer should be made to understand what you desire him to tell you, and then his attention should be kept riveted thereon short of fatigue. Every break is so much time lost and so much ground to go over again. It is better to get through with "the weather," "the health of the family," before the test begins and leave politics and religion until after.

7. *It is unwise to have only one set of Snellen's test types.* Children and even adults soon learn the letters off by heart and the examination is worthless and parrot-like. By substituting a different card you avoid this trap and get actual results.

8. *It is a mistake not to take the age of every customer and his punctum prox-*