

PHARMACEUTICAL

THE PHYSICIAN AND THE PHARMACIST

By Albert H. Brundage, M.D., Phar. D., Brooklyn.

It is passing strange that any inharmonious relationship or feeling should exist between the physician and the pharmacist.

They are naturally as identical in their interests and as closely related in their purposes as the knight and his armor-bearer, as the general and his aides. Both the physician and the pharmacist are engaged in a war upon disease and against death, and are truly "comrades in arms." In the common cause, the relief of human misery, the protection and salvation of human life, they are the community's resource, representatives, and defenders. They are thus mutually interested, bearing such responsibilities and associated in such dependencies as would seem to inseparably cement the fraternal relationship naturally existing between them.

But, unfortunately, a lack of harmony exists, and the fact is a matter of chagrin to those members of each profession who have the true interests of their profession at heart.

Unfavorable comments and scathing criticisms by members of the one profession concerning the methods of those of the other, serve but to widen the breach, instead of bridging it; to create the impression that there is no fraternal feeling; that they are enemies, instead of vocational kinsmen; that one profession is trying to prey on the other and prosper at his expense.

This is all wrong and altogether unworthy members of such professions, and such attitude or seeming condition must have originated in certain mutual misunderstandings: in a failure to fully and properly recognize the rights, privileges, duties, responsibilities, and conditions inherent in each profession. -

Members of each profession appear so jealous of their rights and so impressed

with their own importance that any fancied encroachment upon the province of one by the other is considered ample ground for assuming the aggrieved defensive, if not aggressive.

Much, if not all, of this inharmonious spirit might be prevented if the members of each profession would be more considerate and make more liberal and fair-minded concessions.

The physician complains about the pharmacist's counter prescribing, substituting, pushing of specialties, favoritisms, comments on the physician's therapeutics, etc.

The pharmacist is loud in his denunciation of dispensing by the physician, of the physician's new-remedy prescribing fads, of his making serious inroads into the pharmacist's business by dispensing methods, etc. He also accuses the physician of an unwarranted superciliousness.

If there could be a medico-pharmaceutical clearing house, doubtless many of these differences would be done away with, but until there is a better understanding through some such medium many of them will continue to exist.

The physician in complaining about the pharmacist's prescribing, very truly avers that as the pharmacist is not educated nor trained as a diagnostician, nor as a therapist, he is not capable of taking the physician's place.

The physician having expended much time, labor, and money in order to qualify himself for his profession, and recognizing the difficulties encountered in diagnosing diseased conditions and applying the proper remedies, naturally views with dissatisfaction any side methods designed to supplant him, or intercept his fee.

When the pharmacist sells some of his medicine by means of his advice for disease, he has been remunerated for his advice and has intercepted the physician's fee.

While the pharmacist should not attempt to treat disease, nor deal with any serious physical condition, the writer has always maintained that the pharmacist can very properly give advice and aid, to the public, in simple matters.