

CHAIRMAN OF FELLOWS SPEAKS

SENSIBLE AGRESSION

In any group discussing Optometry's problems and future, some one is bound to point out sooner or later, that too many optometrists avoid all actions which are aggressive in so far as their own position in the field of relief of human ailments is concerned. Many a good plan that would have advanced Optometry immeasurably has been killed by over-cautious men who have been fearful of "arousing the other professions". Some how or other no attempt has ever been made to demonstrate whether the profession of Optometry is worth-while or not. The question of what would happen to efficiency, health and well-being if Optometry were wiped out over night has never been completely studied. It would seem logical, however, after a little thought, that if Optometry ceased to exist, some other similar science would immediately evolve to supply the need it now supplies. It is the profession that is of value, though and not necessarily the individual optometrist. He may be ever so inefficient, unskilled, ignorant, but laws of economics will take care of him.

Some one is going to make a comparative survey of the scholastic training of Optometrists in general and the other professions. The results should be interesting and ought to do much to convince some of us that Optometry is not a usurper, not unscientific, not quackery, not a mere mechanical trade.

Some are self-conscious of the charge that Optometry has come out in bastardy from the jewelry grade. This ought to cause pride instead of embarrassment. The jewelers of old were respected as men of high integrity, of unusual skill and discrimination and practiced their art openly and proudly. We might say that theology evolved from the medicine men and witch-doctors of old. That law and medicine came from the barbers and peddlers. They were practiced in secret, they were feared rather than respected and their base was ignorant superstition. Odious comparisons.

In neither of these comparisons can Optometrists find as much satisfaction however, as they can in the services rendered. Syntonic Optometrists can become more conscious of the benefits of the science than plain optometrists, because in using the technic the relationship between efficient comfortable vision and bodily well-being is always apparent. The real syntonist no longer thinks entirely in terms of best visual acuity and not only does he do more for his patient but indirectly he does more for himself because he operates on a service basis instead of a material-vending one. Syntonic case histories are lists of people made happy and what better endeavor than making simply, "I serve", and if that be the shame of his own incompetency?" If not incompetent, let him stand forth and display his honors in any company. Those we serve are too unorganized to be articulate, but their very existence is the sounding board against which our self-esteem can vibrate. And it is not crime to use self-esteem to keep from being trod upon.

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