

THE APOTHECARY OF THE GEORGIAN PERIOD AND OF TO-DAY,
WHY THE LOWERED ESTIMATE.*

BY JOSEPH JACOBS.

Know the great genius of this land
Has many a light, aerial band
Who all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labors ply. (Burns—"A Vision")

A member of a profession which has had its votaries for forty centuries, and which has maintained its prestige and usefulness in all the advancing and expanding growth of knowledge and culture, as civilization evolved from savagery, has no just cause to "hang his head and a' that."

Jurisprudence, warfare, medicine, theology itself, and all other ranks and professions have produced no greater achievements in their fields, if usefulness be the measure of worth, than those of pharmacy in its wide and important domain. Its historical background is found in the earliest annals of our race. Like all other branches of learning and of art it was dominated by the superstitions of the successive eras, but it was as prompt to throw off the accompaniments of error and to adopt the practice of reason as any other department, and the story of its development furnishes the names and achievements of men that glorify and exalt human nature.

Pharmacy in all the years of history has produced men whose works have benefited mankind by discovering the *materia medica* necessary for the alleviation of "the thousand ills that flesh is heir to;" and, to-day, stands "full armed and panoplied" with all the modern resources for beating back the forces of pain and disease.

I shall here only bring to mind one of the endeavors of pharmacists, which, in a concrete way, throws a light on the estimation in which pharmacy as a profession was regarded in that period of history which marked the rise of modern science in all its branches. I allude to the time when literature produced a Shakespeare, philosophy a Bacon, when Voltaire rifted the intellectual heavens with his lightning flashes of wisdom and of wit, when the world was awakening in politics to the thrills of democracy, and the spirit of travel, adventure and investigation was beginning to move the activities of the enterprising and bold, to bring the peoples of widely separated lands into closer and more frequent contact; when, in Italy, the astronomers were proving a new theory of the universe; in France, the chemists were noting the laws of physical and chemical action and when, in America, new fields of natural history and life were unfolding to the eyes of observant colonizers. This was the time when Newton spoke, Humboldt uncovered the secrets of nature in many lands, and soon thereafter Burns poured a new note of love into the songs which moved men's hearts to a broader and milder and more brotherly humanity.

The Apothecaries in this period were associated with the grocers, forming a joint corporation with them. Their business activities were regulated by a charter

* Read before the Section on Historical Pharmacy, A. Ph. A., St. Louis meeting, 1927.

which considered them as one body. The Apothecaries became dissatisfied with such a status and moved for a separation. It may be said that their *Magna Carta* was granted by James I.

It ran, in part, as follows:

James; by the Grace of God King, etc.

To whom these presents may come, Greeting!

WHEREAS very many Empyrics and unskillful and ignorant men do abide in our City of London, which are not skilled in the Art and Mystery of Apothecaries, but do make and compound many unwholesome, hurtful and deceitful, corrupt and dangerous medicines, and the same do sell and daily transmit to the daily hazard of the lives of our subjects; We, therefore, have thought it necessary to disunite and disassociate the Apothecaries of our city into one body corporate and politic, to whom is given in all future times the management of these inconveniences after the manner of other companies.

It was in 1662 that the corporation purchased, fitted up and moved into Cobham House, which was to be Apothecaries headquarters. Here, under restrictions, they admitted new members, and soon had all of the select on their rolls. Among these was the great botanist, Thomas Johnson, who revised "Gerrard's Herbal," adding a thousand new specimens, including the first local list of wild flowers of England. Here the Apothecaries instituted "herbalizing" excursions, which became a permanent part of the practices of the company, and which may have suggested to Linnæus, himself, the great natural history excursions he led in Sweden.

But their main achievement was yet to come. The great fire of London destroyed their home, yet the loss and the confusion did not abate their ardor. They conceived the idea of establishing a Botanical Garden, and after many sacrifices and efforts obtained a lease on a tract of land at Chelsea in 1673. Here, on the Thames and the Westbourne, in the vicinity of the great Military Hospital, the Apothecaries began to plant and tend their treasured Garden, which to this day is a spot arousing their pride and visited by all who take a delight in natural history. Within ten years the Garden was so famous that Dr. Herman, the botanist of Leyden, was moved to make a visit and to exchange seeds with the members in charge. By 1684 it had attracted the notice of Sir Hans Sloane, who wrote an account of seeing the afterwards famous imported and transplanted cedars of Lebanon growing there. The next year Evelyn came and noted the "many rare annuals and the tree bearing Jesuit's bark (Chinchona), which has done such wonders in *Quartan Agnes*." Here we find the beginning of these efforts which resulted in the growing of Cinchona in India and laid the foundation of the quinine industry, after the Apothecary, Robert Talbot, had cured Charles II of his ague.

The land constituting the Garden became the property, by purchase, of Sir Hans Sloane, the great physician, naturalist and founder of the British Museum. He afterward presented it to the Apothecaries, on terms that made it practically their own and he, during all of his life, was a frequent visitor and helpful patron.

Under the care of John Watts, James Sherrard, Philip Miller, and a succession of other curators, the Garden greatly grew and flourished.

Miller was the author of "The Garden's Dictionary," which won for him the title of *Hortularium Princeps* in the estimation of all foreign botanists. And it was he who first noticed the part taken by insects in the fertilization of flowers.

Isaac Rand was also one of the directors and distributors of plants at the Garden and the Apothecaries were indebted to this F. R. S. for a catalog in Latin of all the plants.

It was Miller who sent from the Apothecaries Garden at Chelsea cottonseed of the Upland variety to Oglethorpe in 1732, when he was about to sail for Georgia, and thus it was that in Georgia was introduced the plant that was to become the producer of the main clothing fabric of the world, for it thus became distributed throughout the cotton-growing states of our Union.

A letter from Grovinius to Miller shows that the Chelsea Gardens brought Linnæus to England.

The appreciation of Sir Joseph Banks, the universal naturalist and sponsor for the settlement of Australia, was shown, when, on his return from the trip to Iceland, he built at the Garden a rockery for Alpine plants, of rocks brought from the lava beds of Hecla.

Lindley became the professor of botany at the Apothecaries Garden, and here wrote his book, "Natural System of Botany," which he dedicated to the Apothecaries.

I have recounted these facts, and given some account of the Apothecaries Garden at Chelsea to show the high estimation in which our profession was held by men whose works are known to all the world. Rulers, governments and learned societies have delighted to recognize the worth of the apothecaries who established this famous shrine for botanists.

Why should we not be proud of our profession, when instances of such achievements brighten the pages of history in all its periods? It had its rise in the noblest inspiration that can move the breasts of men—that of a wish to remove, alleviate and cure the ills which afflict the human frame, ease and bring comfort and pleasure to physical existence, thereby increasing the efficiency and joy of life.

Shall we not, in view of the great achievements of our profession, banish every suggestion of an "inferiority complex" from within or without our ranks, and go forward with renewed zeal to fulfill the great objects of our ASSOCIATION, so well expressed in the Consitution we have framed:

"To improve and regulate the drug market, by preventing the importation of inferior adulterated or deteriorated drugs, and by detecting and exposing home adulterations. To encourage such proper relations among Druggists, Pharmacists, Physicians and the people at large, as may promote the public welfare, and tend to mutual strength and advantage.

"To improve the Science and Art of Pharmacy by diffusing Scientific knowledge among Apothecaries and Druggists, fostering Pharmaceutical literature, developing talent, stimulating discovery and invention, and encouraging home production and manufacture in the several departments of the drug business.

"To suppress empiricism, and to restrict the sale and dispensing of medicines to regularly educated Druggists and Apothecaries.

"To create and maintain a standard of professional honesty equal to the amount of our professional knowledge, with a view to the highest good and greatest protection to the public."

It is well for a man to respect his own vocation whatever it is and to think himself bound to uphold it and to claim for it the respect that it deserves.
