

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

C. B. JORDAN—CHAIRMAN OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, A. A. C. P., EDITOR OF THIS
DEPARTMENT.

Editor's Note: The following paper by Prof. Edward P. Claus presents a method of teaching microscopical pharmacognosy that will make a subject that, to some, is dry, uninteresting and impractical, become interesting, instructive and enjoyable. I am fully aware of the fact that botanists will not agree with me that microscopical pharmacognosy may be what I have implied, but personal experience tinges my views. I am also aware of the fact that I have no authority to criticize the teaching of subjects outside of my field, but if all students, including those that may have special interest for the subject, must take certain courses, then it is our duty to make them as interesting as possible. A dry subject may become intensely interesting in the hands of a good teacher and a live one may lose all interest in the hands of a poor teacher. The paper by Prof. Claus will be helpful to teachers of pharmacognosy.—C. B. JORDAN, *Editor*.

MICROSCOPICAL PHARMACOGNOSY.

BY EDWARD P. CLAUS.*

Dr. L. K. Darbaker has not given me his original paper on this subject, but since his ideas embody our teaching plan, I shall try to relay to you some of his thoughts.

In the Pittsburgh College of Pharmacy, School of Pharmacy, University of Pittsburgh, the student in the freshman year studies biology, in the second year microscopy and in the third year, histological pharmacognosy. He has a distinct advantage in these studies by performing practical work in the same laboratory for these subjects under the guidance of the same group of instructors. The work has been correlated in such a manner that one course is related directly to the next.

The members of our department feel that when the average student enters college, in no matter which field, he is more or less ill at ease, nervous and easily discouraged due to the extreme change in environment. In consideration of these factors, we believe that the best method of beginning instruction in biology is the laboratory study of plant specimens with which the student is familiar, particularly, members of the spermatophytes which he sees practically every day. This procedure is in direct contrast to the usual method of study from the taxonomical viewpoint, from the lowest to the highest forms. However, we feel that, given something he can identify and examine easily, the student's first few days are made more pleasant, and his attention and interest are stimulated. A field aster, a morning glory flower, bean seedlings and corn seedlings, for the first few laboratory hours, followed by more complex spermatophyte forms, then members of the pteridophytes, bryophytes and thallophytes, interspersed with simple experiments on growing plants constitute the first semester's work. Living material is used whenever possible. Microscopical work is not considered except if important structures or tissues are to be seen, and then the microscopical slides are under the direct supervision of the instructor in charge. During the freshman year, the student is directed in the proper method of collecting, drying and mounting of botanical speci-

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