

THE REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF PHARMACY.

BY H. V. ARNY.

The Chairman of the Scientific Section of the American Pharmaceutical Association made at the New York meeting the following recommendation:

“That the Association discontinue the Report on the Progress of Pharmacy in the Year Book, but publish same in monthly installments as a part of the JOURNAL of the Association, or in a new journal, and that all abstracts be published within one or two months of the publication date of the original paper. The Year Book of the Association should be continued, but contain only record of the activities of the Association during the year, be prepared by the General Secretary and published and distributed as soon as possible after each annual meeting.”

To this proposition the writer submits his vigorous objections, both as a rank-and-file member of the Association and also as its Reporter on the Progress of Pharmacy.

As a member of the A. Ph. A., the writer has fought for the Year Book in its present form since he believes that a bound book containing the Report on the Progress of Pharmacy is what a large majority of our members want. This point seemed settled by the ballot of 1916 (see JOURNAL OF THE A. PH. A., 1917, 184) so at this time it need merely be pointed out that it is the exception rather than the rule for the pharmacist to have loose journals bound and that in many private pharmaceutical libraries in this country the only bound periodicals are our old Proceedings and our Year Books. Fond as the writer is of pharmaceutical periodicals, the old Proceedings and the present Year Books are the only ones of this class having permanent positions on his book-shelves and this is true of hundreds of others in the A. Ph. A. Hence publishing the Report in unbound form will make the Report lose half of its educational value.

Another objection as a member of the A. Ph. A. that the writer has to the proposition is that the publication of the material now in the Report on the Progress of Pharmacy in monthly installments will make the Report a loosely constructed, unscientific jumble of information. It is likely that this statement will be challenged by testimony showing the value of *Chemical Abstracts*, of the abstract pages of the *Journal of the Chemical Society*, and of *Botanical Abstracts*. Just those examples are exactly what is in mind, when making the foregoing statement. Science is classified knowledge and it will take pretty forcible arguments to persuade the writer that really classified knowledge is found in a journal where one has to look in a year's volume (provided it is bound) in a dozen or twenty-four places to find references to a particular subject, let us say pharmacognosy. This perhaps explains why the Society of Chemical Industry is now publishing each year, besides the scattered abstracts in its journal, a classified summary of the chemical work of the year in a single volume.

Another fault of the plan of publishing the Report on the Progress of Pharmacy in monthly installments is the chance of blunders arising from the rush of getting out a journal each month at a specified time. None but those with journalistic experience can realize the wild rush accompanying the getting out of a magazine, even when there is a staff of workers giving its entire time to the work. To

those who know, the wonder is, not that mistakes creep in, but that so few blunders are to be found. But blunders there are and these are due to no reason other than the rush that a definite schedule of publication demands. In the writer's opinion, an abstract publication should be a leisurely affair; a book that it is intended to keep and to study as the years roll on; a compilation of data to which sufficient time has been given to free it as much as possible from the blunders of haste.

All of the objections to the plan of a monthly abstract journal given above are presented by the writer as one of the 3,000 members of the A. Ph. A. As Reporter on the Progress of Pharmacy, the writer has several more objections which he freely discussed at the New York meeting of the Council, but which are scarcely the material to present in printed form. Reduced to its simplest form, the proposal will mean the change from a Reporter who can arrange his time to suit himself (provided that the work is not permitted to lag) to an Editor working on a definite scale, subjected to the rush described above. The change cannot be made except at distinct advance in cost to the Association, an advance cost which, in the writer's opinion, is scarcely justified by advantages obtained.

In conclusion, the Reporter desires to say that he is curious to know how many members of the A. Ph. A. agree with the outspoken opponents of the Year Book in their statements that the present Year Book is of little value to them. As the Reporter is now giving to the Year Book one-quarter of his working time for one-tenth of his total income, he would be the first to demand a stopping of the waste of his time as well as the waste of the funds of the Association should he become convinced that a majority of members of the A. Ph. A. find the Year Book an unnecessary publication.

THE TEACHER AND THE RESEARCH WORKER.

A teacher and an investigator are not always to be found in the same man or woman. No one who teaches can possibly know too much of the subject in his charge, but a different degree of knowledge may suffice for the mere teaching of a topic from that complete mastery which can alone equip the investigator, he who leads us out into new and untrodden fields and adds, by actual discovery or at least by placing things in a truer light, to the sum total of human knowledge. It is no wonder, then, that these two things, the training of teachers and the training of scholars and investigators, should have fallen somewhat apart. On the one hand we are told by some that a teacher had better spend more of his time in learning how to teach than to spend it all in the acquisition of his subject. Elsewhere we find a certain condescension on the part of the men of microscopes and laboratories for "mere teachers" who impart only what they have garnered and do not acquire original or new stores of knowledge.—"The Gownsmen" in *Philadelphia Public Ledger*.
