

# THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF PHARMACEUTICAL FACULTIES

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The first part of Professor Beard's address consisted of greetings to the student body and a brief review of the progress of pharmaceutical education in the South.

C. B. JORDAN, *Chairman and Editor.*)

## CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND MENTAL ATTITUDES.

BY J. G. BEARD.

(An address delivered in Nov. 1923 before the pharmacy students at the Medical College of Virginia.)

The message I bring to you concerns a matter very close to my heart and is about a subject the importance of which cannot be over-emphasized. I have reference to what we may, for lack of a better term, call class consciousness: something having to do with the mental attitude of a pharmacist towards his profession.

It is well at the very start to state that pharmacy is and always will be exactly what its practitioners believe it to be—neither better nor worse, higher nor lower than it is made by the thinking of its followers. The explanation of this fact is largely psychological. You and I know that we strive for *possible* goals and pass up those which are beyond what we *think* are our limitations. If that goal happens to be a certain result in a business enterprise and we are positive that we can attain to it, the chances are mightily in favor of our doing so. The very fact of our certainty carries with it the assurance of our interest and determination. But, on the other hand, if the accomplishment seems beyond our ability we usually abandon all thought of its attainment and failure ensues. We can say then that any enterprise in which we are engaged is controlled and limited by what we *think* we can do with it. This is not to say that we can do all that we believe we can do—too many failures attest the falsity of such an idea, but it is to say that we can seldom do a thing which our judgment tells us is beyond our capacities. We are defeated at the very start by our minds. This reasoning can logically be carried to the vast enterprise which we call pharmacy.

But what is pharmacy? There are many definitions which can be and are applied to it, but all save one are technical in phraseology. Your teachers have told you that it is the art or the science or the business of this, that, or the other thing, and they are right. In telling you what pharmacy is, however, they are thinking in terms of distinctions, giving you definitions that distinguish drug manipulations and sales from other forms of effort. The exceptional definition I spoke of applies equally well to every profession or business and is this: *Pharmacy is the concrete embodiment of the qualities of its human forces.* It is one sort of thing in this generation and another sort entirely when a new group takes it over, but always it is an expression of the men directing its tendency. These men in turn are the slaves of their own thoughts. If this assumption is correct and you are wishful that the profession during your tenancy shall maintain its highest traditions, it behooves you to begin now, as students, so to train your thinking that when you come to take over the directorship of this second oldest of all the callings you can perpetuate the best of its past, render keener the initiative of its present, and add even greater honor to its practice in the future.

A fundamental point to start from in your thinking is the conversion of yourself to the proposition that pharmacy, rightfully practiced, is one of the higher forms of human endeavor. Until this premise is firmly established in your mind you can never get out of or put into the calling all that the work holds of promise. With the right sort of thinking this conclusion will be inevitable. Nothing is clearer to me than the fact that no person can give his best, his conscientious best, to an