

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

undertaking unless it holds not only his interest but his admiration as well. His interest, so that he may get joy from his job; his admiration, so that he gets honest pride in the performance of his duty. In order for superlative effort to flow from you into a task, your heart must belong entirely to the task, and your heart can be won only after you have been convinced of the worthiness of the work. I say to you in all earnestness that pharmacy has in it the necessary elements to win your regard and to hold your interest.

Two main considerations determine the real value of any calling. First, the service it renders the world, and, second, the profit it returns to its followers. Let us briefly apply these tests to pharmacy, and see whether the work is worth while and whether or not it pays. We can start, I think, with the proposition that the world needs medicines to alleviate, palliate, and cure pain and disease. Until civilization and science carry us beyond what now seems possible, the world is going to continue to need these mediums of relief; in the present stage of man's being it seems inconceivable that he could carry on lacking the assistance of drugs. Imagine, if you can, surgery without anesthetics, infection without antiseptics, pain without anodynes, disease without specifics! We cannot harbor such notions. If necessity for drugs is vital, it is imperative that the supply be ample, not only in quantity but in quality. But simply recognizing the necessity does not guarantee the production. To whom, then, must the world turn to satisfy its drug demands? Not to doctors surely, proficient though they are in the administration of the finished product; nor to chemists, qualified though they be in certain processes; but to one single group and only one single group can it turn—the pharmacists. Without this class of worker pain would be unrelieved, disease would run rampant, distress would tie the hands of mankind. But happily pharmacy prevents the chance of this condition, and so ably does it measure up to its obligation that the minds of men never dwell upon the horrors that even a day of drug deprivation would bring. Going into every crook and cranny of the globe; searching the seas, the soil and the air, it requisitions with skill and art, science and industry, a host of crude materials from which it fashions the refined agents that we know as modern medicines. Certainly, then, we can say that pharmacy is indispensable; its service necessary; and its practice a humane performance, and saying this we have answered in the affirmative the question: "Is the work worth while?"

But what of the monetary reward it returns to its practitioners? I have said that not only should a calling be profitable to the world but it should also furnish profit to its followers. How does pharmacy measure up when judged by this standard? To begin with there are ten divisions of pharmacy and the operatives in the different divisions receive different degrees of compensation. I do not pretend to know the financial reward that each of these groups receives for its labor. I doubt if any one could do else than generalize about the subject since so many considerations must be taken into account before fixing upon any definite figures. Such factors as section of country, size of firm, nature of business, length of service, and, above all, character of worker, enter into any determination of recompense. I will say, however, that the reward is reasonably liberal if the worker is properly equipped educationally and is sufficiently industrious and ambitious to reach the maximum salaries paid. Measured by standards of profit pharmacy does not rank as high as several other professions, but it nevertheless may be made to yield a very comfortable living with sufficient average to provide against the infirmities of age. In other words, unless one has fixed upon money as the supreme essential of life with its accompanying dollar judgment of values, the practice of pharmacy is not only worth while but is fairly remunerative as well. If the premises I have tried to establish are conceded, namely, that pharmacy is an honorable calling entitled to your highest regard, and offers monetary rewards to satisfy reasonable desires for comforts and pleasures—I say if these points are conceded, then you must admit that pharmacists should be able to bring to the work the right attitude of mind.

Unfortunately, however, and I say this with the greatest reluctance, the average pharmacist of to-day does not exhibit this attitude towards his calling. I shall not go so far as to say that he is ashamed of it, though some pharmacists leave that impression with a casual observer, but I will say that he is thinking of his work too much in terms of failings, faults and errors, and too little in terms of integrity, worthiness and pride. Constantly he is asking the question: What is the matter with pharmacy? and invariably he is answering his own query incorrectly. There is nothing the matter with pharmacy! There may be certain objectionable practices carried on in some of the departmentized institutions that parade under the banner of drug store, but this is no indictment of pharmacy—it is an infliction. This sort of thing is exceptional, not typical. We want to get away from the sort of analytical thinking wherein poisonous reagents are employed and dark-looking results sought for, we want to forget analysis altogether for a time and practice some synthesis. We have done too much tearing down; let us now do some building up. * * * * *

There is a very pressing need just now for an agency that can unify and harmonize the various forces in American pharmacy; some sort of medium that can evolve from the conglomerate and conflicting policies of to-day a program that will bring closer together the man power of pharmacy, and which will so establish a parallelism of purpose as to cause the several branches of the drug business to travel alongside one another towards some common objective. While it is true that each of the ten divisions of pharmacy has individual aims and specialized purposes, it is equally true that all ten have a common concern in the welfare and advancement of pharmacy. Anything which advantages the whole benefits each part, and anything which checks the advancement of one branch slows up the progress of the entire profession. Wisdom, therefore, urges that the several units of pharmacy organize as one unit instead of holding apart as unrelated bodies.

But can the different divisions of pharmacy be converted to this opinion, be persuaded to this program? It is to be doubted if any other calling has among its personnel as diversified a type of worker as is represented on pharmacy's roster. This is not to say that other professions and trades have an entirely uniform sort of membership, but it is to point out that they have a more homogeneous group to carry through their specialized undertakings than is the case with the drug business. It is in consequence easier for such closely related and resembling units to crystallize their ideas and efforts in some predetermined program; simpler for them to work under the direction of some centralized agency than is possible for the somewhat dissimilar groups that severally compose the human forces in pharmacy. But in spite of the seeming diversity of our aims and the differences in our make-up, we can and must establish some sort of class consciousness that will bring order out of chaos, union out of separation, and harmony out of disaffection.

Individualism has developed to a further degree in pharmacy than in any occupation I can think of. Every man thinks for himself and acts for himself irrespective of results among his fellow-craftsmen. This sort of independence is all very well so long as the individual prospers and the class is not interfered with, but only that long. We have now passed the point where such a course is permissible and have reached a stage where collectivity should be practiced. We must accordingly modify our ways of thinking and adopt methods in conformity with the spirit of the times and in agreement with universal custom. Plural authority must supplant individual freedom in order that the good of all may be paramount. (This is not Bolshevistic doctrine but a fundamental feature of the American Constitution—merely another way of saying that the majority shall rule.) Pharmacy needs to set up a unifying institution of such character, vision, and force that we can safely entrust our several interests to its guardianship. And with its establishment there should develop a mental attitude in pharmacists which will bring them to see that only by collective action can individuals succeed; make them see too that they are the only class which to-day lacks a close-knit organization to

formulate and enforce policies. I like to believe that there is already in existence just such an institution as I have mentioned. It would, of course, need to be somewhat modified to serve our varied purposes, but this would involve a very simple change in machinery and not in constitution. I have reference to the American Pharmaceutical Association, the oldest drug organization in this country. If this is the logical medium through which we can all work, it is very important that it begin to function comprehensively in the immediate future and for this reason:

Shortly now retail pharmacy is either going to split apart into two distinct divisions, the one departmental and wholly commercial, the other apothecarial and largely scientific; or else it will narrow down again to an enterprise confined chiefly to the supply of materials related to disease. It is improbable that the developments of the past few years can continue for long in their present directions. When the change takes place, it is important that it be in an orderly and not in a hit-or-miss manner. This orderliness can be guaranteed only if some central directing agency is in control. But this controlling agent ought to be thinking and acting in relation to pharmacy as an entity, not merely in relation to a constituent part of the whole. It is true that the retail side of the drug industry is quantitatively the largest side, but it is also true that its interests are so intertwined with the eight other sides that it cannot afford and should not be allowed to pursue independently any course which ignores the wishes or the welfare of the others. No organization in this country except the American Pharmaceutical Association even pretends to work in the interests of more than two divisions of pharmacy. No other body than the A. Ph. A. is sufficiently comprehensive in scope or varied in personnel to engineer the complex machinery that must function in the maintenance and advancement of pharmacy as a whole. We may well agree upon this parent of all drug organizations as the medium for corralling the human forces of pharmacy, and making them into one big family. When we boil down to essentials and vaporize the confusing elements that keep us from seeing clearly, we find that practically nothing stands in the way of carrying this sort of program through.

There may be another and a better way out of our present difficulties, but to my mind the solution lies in having a masterful organization which will be sufficiently intelligent and comprehensive to formulate the right kind of policies and sufficiently powerful to force its issues to a successful conclusion. It would be an organization composed of at least ten sections, each section covering a particular phase of pharmacy. Ordinarily a section would be a law unto itself, the retailers deliberating upon their problems, the wholesalers upon theirs, the manufacturers upon theirs. This would be true until an issue arose affecting groups outside a particular section, that is, affecting pharmacy as whole, and then all of the sections sitting together in executive session could discuss the matter from every angle and take such action as would advantage the entire profession. Independent action has been thoroughly tried; it does not work. Mass action has never been given a chance; why not try it out? It has no element of risk and it does hold out possibilities of success.

There may be those among you who are thinking that earlier in my remarks I have advocated an "ostrich policy" for all of the unhealthy conditions of pharmacy as it is now practiced, a policy which would ask you to refuse to see ills in the body pharmaceutic instead of expecting you to recognize and to combat them forcefully. If such have been your thoughts, you do my meaning an injustice. I admit the presence of certain evils, but I contend that they are mental and not physical, human and not professional, curable and not deadly. I maintain that the ills will disappear when and not until pharmacists themselves so change their attitudes as to allow healthy and not diseased notions to course through their thinking; when they practice the preachments of their distinguished fellow-druggist, Coué, by saying and believing that every day in every way pharmacy is getting better and better. There must also, of course, be the resolve to substitute

collective activity for individual initiative when matters of general concern arise, but this will follow and not precede the development of correct mental attitudes. Only when the thinking of pharmacists gets right will their actions lead to a real success. And in proportion to the way they think all these things will they strive to put pharmacy where it belongs. I charge you, therefore, to think healthily and loftily, as well as intensively and technically, so that when you take over the superintendency of to-morrow's pharmacy you will not only guarantee its financial prosperity but will so engineer its destiny as to create in the hearts of its followers the pride of profession, the ideals of service, and the love of work that characterized the members of our craft in the olden years* * * * *

Shortly now college years will lengthen to their end and you will find yourself entering upon a new era where hopes and promises, fears and failures abound. And as this era adds age to itself striding forward through its span, Destiny will decree for some of you a pleasant path, for some a thorny trail. I am not content to wish for you a happy career, or bon voyage alone, but instead I shall hope that you travel humbly if the road be clear and gamely if the way be hard; that you may meet success with dignity and adversity with a smile. While others are wishing for you a rose-strewn path, I shall be hoping that you travel gallantly; while others are wishing that you could avoid all troublous tracks, I shall hope that however rough the way you will advance unwhiningly. Thousands of days lie on ahead of you that have to be met, days of fight and days of fun, good and bad all mixed together. May you have strength for the struggles, grit for the game, abundance of pleasure, and your share of good luck!

STANDARDS FOR WHISKY AND BRANDY TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PHARMACOPŒIA.

Announcement has just been made by E. Fullerton Cook, Chairman of the Revision Committee of the United States Pharmacopœia, that standards for whisky and brandy as medicines will be included in the new Pharmacopœia now being revised. This is in response to a demand by the physicians of the country.

Under the national prohibition laws, whisky and brandy are classed as medicines and as such are legally prescribed in many cases of serious illness, but at the present time no legal standards exist for their purity.

All physicians of the General Revision Committee, acting as a sub-committee, were appointed to study the situation and take the necessary action. This sub-committee has issued the following statement:

"In view of the fact that a large number of physicians in the United States believe alcohol to be a valuable therapeutic agent, and in view of the wide-spread adulteration of the alcoholic liquors at present available, the members of this Referee Committee feel that for the protection of the public there should be an official standard for medicinal spirits."

By including standards for whisky and brandy as medicines, in the Pharmacopœia, which is the legal standard for drugs and medicines under the Food and Drugs Act, the machinery of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and of the boards of health and boards of pharmacy throughout the country is enlisted in protecting the sick against adulterated and poisonous products.

* Professor Beard's address did not end at this point, but rather continued in the development of the idea that the much-abused term Service should be properly defined, assimilated, and translated into a sacred resolve to make the drug business not only fruitful in profit to its practitioners but above all to make it contribute generously to the health and welfare of mankind. Lack of space, however, forbids the publication of the remaining portion of the lecture which ended with the concluding paragraph following that to which this reference applies.—C. B. J.