

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

The Conferences of Teachers of Pharmacy, Chemistry, Materia Medica and Pharmaceutical Economics held annually give splendid opportunities for the presentation of papers and for the discussion of subjects of interest to all teachers of Pharmacy. Unfortunately, space will not permit the printing of discussions, but all papers are printed in this section of the *JOURNAL*.

It has been my endeavor to group these papers whenever possible and the following papers on Botany and Pharmacognosy will be of special interest to teachers of Materia Medica.—
C. B. JORDAN, *Editor*.

THE TEACHING OF BOTANY.

BY C. C. PLITT.

It goes without saying that the teacher of Botany, should be well prepared for teaching his subject. He cannot know too much of it, even if he is called upon to teach the more elementary parts of Botany to Pharmacy students. What, after all, is most important to teach such students about plants? Two things at least, either one of which can be called first and foremost, and both so closely connected that they must be taken together. One of them would be a general knowledge of the plant kingdom. He should be taught that there are four large divisions of plants, and how they are distinguished one from another. He should know, too, the subdivisions of each; that the Thallophytes are conveniently divided into five groups, two groups of which, the Algae and the Fungi, stand out conspicuously, and of which he should know the main subdivisions. He should know, too, that there are two large groups of the Bryophytes, at least three of the six groups of the Pteridophytes, and the two groups of the Spermatophytes and their subdivisions. He should be taught that this classification is one not only for convenience, but that back of it all is the idea of greater and greater complexity in structure and development; that the Thallophytes are the lowly organized plants, many consisting of but one cell, that the Mosses are much higher, and that the Seed Plants are most highly organized. It is only a step now, to classification or taxonomy in general. Then, too, he should be taught that the plant is a living entity, and the meaning of this concept. What is meant by living? What peculiarities distinguish a living thing from the non-living? What is meant by an organism, an organ, and what by a life history? He should be taught that every living thing has a live history, the story of its development from its earliest life until it reproduces its kind. He should learn of the various ways by which plants may reproduce themselves, of sexual reproduction and of propagation.

The idea of organs leads to a study of function, and the student should learn, as far as possible, the uses of the many organs that, in countless ages, have gradually been evolved by plants.

These two things, which I claim should be taught, should stand out as a background and be kept constantly in mind. It is true that in teaching Pharmacy students, the fact must not be lost sight of that one of the real reasons for their study of Botany is, that they will use this knowledge in the study of Pharmacognosy. Morphology, therefore, and especially that of the highest plants must