

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.

AND WHAT IS CULTURE?

BY J. W. STURMER.

"Botany," says Professor Zufall in the May issue of THIS JOURNAL, "is a cultural subject." When he tells us that a certain flower is staminate, or that a certain leaf is cordate, we know precisely what he means, for a scientific term has a definite meaning, and there is no ambiguity about it. When, however, he speaks of botany as being of *cultural* value, he uses a word which is subject to common usage, and by all sorts of people—a word which has acquired a variety of connotations. What does he mean? What do *we* mean when *we* argue about cultural subjects in connection with pharmaceutical education? Do we agree in our definition of *cultural*? It may be that the confusion which has characterized certain discussions of the proposed curriculum for pharmacy students, has arisen not so much from a difference of opinion as from our inability to understand each other.

The word culture is interpreted variously. We speak, for example, of the culture of the ancient Egyptians, and have in mind the aggregate of human development to which they had attained. We characterize people of our acquaintance as persons of culture if they manifest esthetic capabilities and show appreciation of the fine arts, namely of literature, music, the drama, painting or sculpture—an appreciation involving not only knowledge and discrimination, but in a large measure, emotional responses. We may also use the term culture to indicate refinement, graces of manner and the ability to conform to the standards of polite society.

I take it, however, that when we speak of the cultural in connection with pharmaceutical education, we have reference particularly to a training which has for its objective—or at least one of its objectives—a broadening of the range of thought, and the development of the ability to think profoundly and clearly. We have in mind, further, the importance of providing a good foundation, and a proper background, for the studies which we are accustomed to classify as vocational or professional. Indeed, as pharmacy makes progress, and factual knowledge accumulates to proportions which are fairly staggering in extent and variety, the necessity for a broad and liberal education as a foundation for the training in those studies which are of direct utility becomes more and more apparent. And every educator knows this.

Thus it may be said that the cultural studies, as the term is employed in connection with curriculum problems, are the foundational or basal subjects which would, of course, give us warrant to include botany in that category.

It must be remembered, to be sure, that the cultural value of any study depends largely upon the method of approach, upon the manner in which it is taught, where the emphasis is placed, in short, depends upon the professor. But, speaking generally, the foundational studies offer greater possibilities for cultural development than do the subjects in specialized fields, which accounts for the fact that, in connection

with education, the terms foundational and cultural are so frequently used interchangeably. The college training of the future pharmacist must be broad and liberal and, in that sense at least, cultural. If we would have him capable to readjust himself to the changes incident to scientific progress, if we expect him to take his place, side by side, with men of the other learned professions, if we would have him possess the breath of knowledge, and to exhibit the morale which he will require if he is to take a part in the advancement of pharmacy, we must see to it that his college course provides something more than a vocational training. There must be, also, cultural education. Indeed, no matter what may be our interpretation of culture, even though we may think of it with reference to the esthetic, or in connection with the social graces, I would still contend that culture is an asset to the pharmacist.

It does appear, however, that in our discussion of the new curriculum, we shall have difficulty in making ourselves understood unless we explain what we have in mind when we classify a subject under the caption "cultural."

DR. GEORGE B. WOOD.*

BY ARNO VIEHOEVER.

Quite a number of years ago, a young lad walked on the sidewalk of one of the residential streets of Philadelphia enjoying the bright breezy morning air, not thinking of anything in particular. Then suddenly he noticed sheets of white paper on the pavement near a house with an open window on the street floor; they were handwritten pages. The boy thought a while, then pulled the string of that house bell. A stately gentleman appeared at the door; the chap inquired whether these papers belonged to him and were wanted. The man readily enough recognized his own handwriting and the pages as part of his finished manuscript of the Commentary on the United States Pharmacopœia, which had been disturbed by a gust of wind reaching his desk. He placed his hand upon the head of the boy, saying with tender devotion: "I trust that you might add luster to this work which has engaged me for a life time." The author was Dr. George B. Wood, the lad our Joseph P. Remington. A true incident in the life of two leaders, related to me by the nephew of Dr. George B. Wood.



DR. GEORGE B. WOOD.

It is a fitting memorial to a man to have his work survive him. If the foundation be right, the partitions of the upper structure may be torn out and replaced by others—even the building may be changed, enlarged in size, increased in height. Dr. Wood deserves lasting credit that he, 100 years ago, took the initiative and established in the revision of the Pharmacopœia the scope, imbued it with his spirit and left the imprint of his broad training,

* Section on Historical Pharmacy, A. PH. A., Baltimore meeting, 1930.