

# THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

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DEPARTMENT.

*Editorial Note:* The following paper, "Has Freshman English Any Permanent Value?" by Alice-Esther Garvin of the Connecticut College of Pharmacy, should be read with thought and care by every teacher in colleges of pharmacy. Miss Garvin has set forth, most emphatically, the need for more and better training in English in colleges of pharmacy if the pharmacist is to take his place as an educated man in his community. I am very sure that no one can take any exceptions to her well-rounded argument on this point. If only one year of English is to be given in the college of pharmacy, there will be differences of opinion as to whether this should be given in the freshman or senior years. English is a tool that the student *must* use throughout his college course and therefore our better colleges, liberal arts, scientific, professional and technical, place it in the first year. Miss Garvin presents splendid arguments for placing it in the senior year. Whether her arguments offset the traditional one presented above is the question that the reader must settle for himself.—C. B. JORDAN, *Editor*.

## HAS FRESHMAN ENGLISH ANY PERMANENT VALUE?

BY ALICE-ESTHER GARVIN.\*

We learn from experience that we learn nothing from experience. Some time ago, with a more or less sanguine hope that pharmacists with college training might be looked upon as the social, intellectual, and professional equals of physicians, surgeons, attorneys, *et al.*, cultural subjects were included in the pharmacy college curriculum. Among these scientifically extraneous subjects was the language supposedly current in the United States: *i. e.*, English. Of course the question naturally arose as to the year in which this study might most logically be placed, and, alas for its permanent value, it was thrust into the first year with the introductory courses in other subjects.

Few people engaged in the heart-rending task of "raising the standard of pharmacy" can deny that English is one of the most important studies taught at any college. Surely a man is judged by his ability to express himself well, to write accurately and forcefully, and to discuss, with his colleagues, affairs of national and international importance. From the point of view of the customer, the pharmacist who speaks well inspires more confidence than the one who seems to have no sense of grammar, who habitually mispronounces or incorrectly uses his words, or whose entire vocabulary seems to be "What else?" or "Will that be all?" We are rapidly approaching the point where people do not expect the druggist to know anything except the compounding of prescriptions, the methods of selling cosmetics, and the relative values of certain patent medicines. If a pharmacist *does* happen to read something besides *True Detective Mysteries*, *War Stories*, *True Confessions*, or *Ballyhoo*, he is looked upon as being so far superior to his fellow-druggists that an explanation is demanded. Contrary to the general belief, intelligent customers like to chat with a pharmacist, particularly if he is the proprietor of a neighborhood store. If he wishes to retain their patronage and goodwill, he must be able to discuss, in fairly well-chosen words, the topics in which

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they are interested. If, however, his horizon is limited to capsules, suppositories, and Mack Sennett comedies, the good customer will often seek another druggist.

To the young men and women who read our catalogs with such naïve faith in the importance of pharmacy as a profession, we owe something. At present, the great aim of pharmacists with vision is to raise the standard of our profession, and we are battling against terrific odds, both within and without the pharmaceutical pale. An important victory has been gained in the adoption of the four-year course; we should commend the laudable work being done by the local, state, and national organizations which have offered resolutions affecting the advancement of the American druggist. We should not, however, lose sight of the fact that in order to raise the standard of pharmacy, we must raise the standard of the pharmacist. Of course we are working ceaselessly; we write to governors, congressmen, senators, the President himself; we seek recognition in the army and navy; we spend weeks, months, and years in surveys and research work. All of this is necessary, and we ought not to eliminate any of it from our plans. But are we also making the pharmacist better able to go on in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Are we broadening the range of his perception? Are we giving him a depth of understanding, of vision, of human sympathy? Are we increasing his appreciation of beauty, of the seven arts, of life itself? Are we thinking of him as an individual, devoting his life to service, and deserving the best that life has to offer, with a trained appreciation of this "best"; or are we thinking of him as a cog in the machine known in general as Pharmacy, but specifically as one more student paying tuition?

Certainly I do not mean that more English in a college of pharmacy would be like a war to end all wars. Nor do I mean that additional courses in English will solve all problems, and simultaneously place the druggists of America on the same mental, social, and professional plane as the surgeons, lawyers, and bankers. My contention is that the greater a pharmacist's knowledge of English in its various phases, the greater correspondingly will be his efficiency in the method of conducting his business, his poise in greeting customers, and his true estimate of himself. By "various phases of English" I mean the writing of a fine sales letter, of a salient editorial, of a feature article for a trade journal, a letter of appreciation for a favor, of congratulation to an important customer; the ability to address, with warranted assurance, the members of a club or society, a state association meeting, a political rally, or a group of several thousand high school students, and by "ability," I mean skill in using well-chosen, powerful, correctly pronounced words—the ability to impress, favorably, an audience, and gain their respect and confidence. I believe, too, that every druggist should be able to take his place among other professional men in their discussions of topics of world interest; that he should have a general, if not specific, knowledge of the great novels, dramas, essays, and poems of this and former generations. A knowledge of the Russian dramatists, or the English poets, or the German essayists, or the French novelists will assist a pharmacist in his understanding of foreign nations, will enable him to discuss these features with any customer who is interested, will permit him to occupy a position of respect and admiration in his community, and may, as a matter of fact, wean him from the sports pages or the humorous sections of the newspapers.

One of the most serious errors made by pharmaceutical educators was the

placing of English in the freshman year, particularly if there is (as in the Connecticut College of Pharmacy) just one year of English in the four-year course. Why is pharmaceutical jurisprudence placed in the fourth year? Because the students will need to know the law when they open their own pharmacies, and might forget the subject in the three-year interim. Why is merchandising placed in the fourth year? Because students will need this upon graduating, albeit the vast majority of them are working in drug stores during the college course, and need, no doubt, some theoretical training. Consider all the subjects placed in the fourth year, and you will discover that they have a direct bearing upon the student's life after he leaves the college. But English, which a pharmacist is going to need *more* than he needs anything else he studies, is put in the first year, on a plane with the introductory, the elementary subjects, and then hurled into the limbo of forgotten things when the onrush of quantitative analysis, accounting, and business management, biochemistry, and pharmacology sweeps them into the scientific field. For three years in college, and for many more years outside of college, he will have no definite contact with courses in English, and unless the faculty members are unusual in their knowledge of grammar-rules, diction, enunciation, *et al.*, the students will not even *hear* correct English in classes, or *read* it in bulletin-board announcements during the other years of his college life.

Let us look at the matter from the student's point of view. The average youth who matriculates at a college of pharmacy—or, for that matter, at any professional school—has had four years of high school English. The educators of America have never changed their minds about English being the one subject that is compulsory for four years in the secondary school. Regardless of the course he intends to pursue in later life, whether the pupil plans to be a surgeon or a teamster, if he graduates from high school, he may have eluded foreign languages, history, mathematics, drawing, singing, physical training, or Greek, but four years' drill in the mother tongue was inescapable. He is young; he has failed, as some administrators fail, to realize the value of this four years of study. To him it has meant a succession of carrying themes carefully, even on rainy days, as the teacher objected to crumpled papers; of memorizing twenty-five lines of "Julius Cæsar," or "Hamlet," or the "Idylls of the King"; of giving oral reports on "How I earned my first dollar"; of correcting grammar; of eliminating from his vocabulary the split infinitive, the picturesque slang phrases, the slurred "ing," the hashed metaphors, the obsolete past participles; of placing commas, periods, apostrophes, semi-colons, and colons in their appointed places. In fact, to the average college of pharmacy freshman, the four years of secondary-school English, despite the beauty, originality, and personal charm of the various teachers who drove him through the subject from year to year, remain, to him, a sort of nightmare, or a thorn painfully removed from the flesh. He enters a college of pharmacy, hoping to be greeted at once with laboratories, prescriptions, compounds, and concomitant practicalities, and what meets his jaded gaze? ENGLISH, for two, three, or four hours a week! Of course the educator who arranged the freshman English course felt, I am sure, that the first year's study was essential to assist the student in his other three years of work in the college. If he is working in a pharmacy, as many freshmen are, he will be greatly benefited by the course, but this benefit will not be so impressive nor so lasting as if it were given later in his career. If

he needs a course to carry him through lectures and written quizzes in pharmacy math, physiology, botany, organic chemistry, dispensing pharmacy, or physics, then the first-year course should be reorganized completely, and hewed to fit students for their work at the college. Certainly it cannot fit them for their work *beyond* the college.

If, on the other hand, no English be given for the first three years, we may expect some splendid and permanent results from the fourth year's training. For three years the student has had scientific subjects relating more or less directly to pharmacy. He may have had, in his first or second year, a few cultural subjects—a little French or German, some economics—but no English. He may have had three years' practical experience in a drug store, where his own employer's wrestling with English may have brought about his own desire to improve his knowledge of that study. No longer will he consider it an introductory course, an elementary subject; no more will he think of it as being a filler-in to pad out the four-year course. If he is a clever youth, he will apply everything taught in that senior course to his own pharmacy, which, at this period, is probably emerging from the dream-chrysalis of his mind. The correct method of writing a business letter to the secretary of the state board of pharmacy is an important matter to a college senior—to a freshman, it is just one more letter; the courteous, yet business-like note to be sent to the Bureau of Industrial Alcohol to apply for Permit "I" has a definite meaning to a fourth-year man—when would a freshman use that information? A letter of appreciation to a hostess, a note of congratulation to a friend, a letter of regret, a note refusing an invitation, a brief missive of condolence—all of these have come within the experience of a senior, while to a freshman, they represent merely a task. The points to be remembered when making an address; the parliamentary procedure contingent upon being an officer of a class, club, or fraternity—or upon being heard from the floor when a member of one of these; the chief points to be taken into consideration when one is discussing with a friend or acquaintance the merits or defects of a motion picture, drama, magazine article, book, advertisement—all of these assume a more definite importance in the mind of a senior than in the mind of a freshman. The latter thinks this information is to be expanded from year to year, possibly in other courses; the senior realizes that this is his last opportunity to have a college English course, and he will be earnest and sincere in the mastery of it. The senior considers himself a full grown man. His friends may be in liberal arts colleges, and, while as a freshman he was too immature to realize his deficiencies in the matter of speech, mental training, cultural background, and a general knowledge of the things people talk about, by the time he has reached his senior year, he is doing some thinking about himself and his impotence in the matter of speech, as he finds himself unable to cope with his friends' discussions. Possibly he may have been doing some reading—a few good books or magazines—without any guidance, or sense of appreciation. THIS is the student who should be given a course in senior English second to none at any university, in any walk of life. He is three years older. His mind has been given a keen edge by scientific study, identification of drugs, compounding of prescriptions, working out chemical equations. He will soon be in a position to be the manager of a store, or perhaps to have his own name, in gold-leaf, on the door. Now, if he has had, three years ago, a course in freshman English,

will he be able to meet his intelligent customers with confidence? Will he know what they mean if they happen to mention a book, magazine, or play? Can he hastily wrench his mind from the present, and fling it back to the past, and remember what he may have learned during his first year of elementary English at the college? Will he be able to remember what seemed to him unimportant and trivial at the time—the writing of news items, of business letters, of worthwhile articles for pharmaceutical journals?

Only those teachers who have had freshmen and upper-classmen in approximately the same type of college English can appreciate the immaturity of the yearlings, and the interest of the older men. The freshmen are becoming acclimated to college life, and they realize that all their subjects will be supplemented in the years to follow; they hear much about foundation work, and elementary principles, and introduction to pharmacy. How much do they hear about other English courses to follow? The pharmaceutical educators believe that this one year will carry a freshman through life, and enable him to fit into the same social and professional sphere as the physician, the lawyer, the clergyman, and the banker. He *completes* his study of English during the freshman year, and for three years he is relieved, so far as the college is concerned, of the responsibility of knowing how to speak, write, or think correctly in the mother tongue. Even the finest English course cannot survive three years of lack of practice, any more than the finest chemistry course can survive three years of unrelieved cultural subjects.

My plea is that we give our college of pharmacy students an opportunity to have a course in English that will mean something to them throughout their lives. Do not relegate it to the freshman year with the other introductory and elementary subjects: that is an insult to their intelligence and to ours. They are going to need the cultural training afforded by this study, and they will enjoy it after three years of sciences. Hundreds of pharmacists, graduates from our colleges, and speaking beautiful, powerful English; writing courteous, grammatically correct, accurately punctuated letters; and being able to keep pace in any discussion of foreign affairs, modern fiction, magazine editorials, will do more to elevate the standard of pharmacy than any number of our papers, articles, speeches, and theories can ever do. If we enrich a pharmacist's life, give him a sense of appreciation, a knowledge of the world that he may gain through no other medium, and a desire to continue developing mentally, he will soon take his place among the men in the other respected professions.

Only the highest praise should be given to colleges such as Western Reserve, where English is placed in the freshman *and* senior years; or to Purdue, where English is given in the first and third years. For those men of vision who are offering two years of English, one of which is in the senior year, I have profound respect and admiration; I wish all the colleges might follow the trail that they have blazed. This placing of English in the fourth year is not a noble experiment; it is a definite step toward that goal which is the object of so many monographs, magazine articles, addresses, committee meetings, and conventions; that goal which burns with a pure, gem-like flame, but which seems almost unattainable. For better pharmacists, for greater respect for our profession, I offer one solution: give two years of English, or take it out of the elementary class, and place it with those subjects that seem almost as important.

"*The Druggists Circular* through the activities of its Associate Editor, Mr. R. W. Rodman, conducted an interesting experiment to determine how well seniors in colleges of pharmacy are informed on up-to-date matters. In fact, it might be said that the one purpose of the experiment was to determine whether these seniors read the drug journals or not. I take it that every college of pharmacy has plenty of drug journals available for the use of the students and that it is a question of whether these students are assigned reading in these journals or are in some other way required to peruse them. The result of this experiment, as shown in the following paper by Mr. Rodman, is enlightening to say the least. The Editor has no defense to make for colleges of pharmacy in this regard. I wish to point out, however, that the trade journals are only a small part of the journals that a good college of pharmacy makes available for the use of its students, and the teachers of the different subjects in colleges of pharmacy will naturally assign reading in the journals that treat more completely of the subject that the instructor is teaching. It therefore remains primarily for the teachers of pharmacy, and especially the teachers of commercial pharmacy, to cover the field that Mr. Rodman so well indicates is not covered. I believe this experiment would have been more interesting had it not been limited to subjects that were found primarily in trade journals. I would urge Deans of colleges of pharmacy to carefully read Mr. Rodman's paper."—C. B. JORDAN, *Editor*.

### CONTEMPORARY PHARMACY AND THE STUDENT.\*

BY ROBERT WILLIAM RODMAN, ASSOCIATE EDITOR, THE DRUGGISTS CIRCULAR.

What does the future hold for pharmacy? Will the pharmacist of to-morrow be in a more advantageous position than the pharmacist finds himself in to-day?

For many years these and similar questions have been propounded on the floors of our national conventions and have appeared in the pages of our drug journals. We have heard it said that the future is what we make it and many of us, no doubt, have taken that statement as more or less bromidic without stopping to realize what we actually can do as individuals and collectively to advance the interests of our profession, particularly as they apply to the future.

Pharmacy has suffered from a number of ills in recent years but I can conceive of none perhaps more basic than the lack of interest, enthusiasm and organization of its members. In my opinion, conditions in the profession which we are unable to correct at the present time will never be rectified until the day dawns when a majority of the pharmacists of the country take a greater interest in their solution. Many projects which have been launched in recent years and which would be of inestimable benefit to the pharmacist have suffered primarily because the man whom they were intended to benefit most knew the least about them and consequently was the least interested in them. Membership in our national and state associations is far from what it should be and the financial status of some of the smaller associations at the present time reflect this condition.

Encouraging the interest and enthusiasm of retail druggists and stimulating them to greater activity is certainly a most important fundamental in not only safeguarding the future of the profession, but also in providing for its present welfare. Assuredly it is one necessity which should be studied at the first opportunity.

A few months ago I undertook to survey the knowledge and interest of the senior students of six of our colleges of pharmacy pertaining to national affairs. How much did the new crop of pharmacists entering the profession know of what

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