

# THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

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DEPARTMENT.

Habitat learned by "brute memory" is easily forgotten while habitat associated with geography, history and travel will be easily learned and not easily forgotten. Dr. Wirth has presented, in the following paper, excellent suggestions for associating drugs with geographical locations. Such suggestion followed and expanded will add interest and pleasure to the teaching of a phase of pharmacognosy that can easily become burdensome.—C. B. JORDAN, *Editor*.

## THE TEACHING OF HABITATS IN PHARMACOGNOSY.\*

BY ELMER H. WIRTH.<sup>1</sup>

In the learning of habitats the average student associates with the name of the drug, the name of a geographical locality; a name having some familiarity perhaps, but which in the end means nothing more than just another name for him to memorize. These facts, however, must be learned and in some cases "brute memory" seems the only solution. Yet, in many cases, we may perhaps find methods of association which will not only ease the student's burden, but will create within him a desire to think. And after all the thinking student will be a far greater credit to his profession than the one who has learned "a la parrot fashion."

In the teaching of habitats such desirable association may be created. The best way perhaps involves the instillation of some geographical knowledge along with the discussion of the drug. This after all is not a difficult task as most students display considerable interest in information concerning foreign lands. It can be done in three ways: *First*, by accounts of the history, collection and commerce of the drug, with mention of the topography and the locality of the region where it is found or cultivated. If the drug is one mentioned in the Bible, the Travels of Marco Polo, or other historical or travel work, familiar to the student, his interest is automatically excited. A second way involves the use of pictures. This brings into play a visual aspect of what was expressed above. The free use of photographs, or preferably lantern slides, in illustrating accounts of the commerce of drugs makes an invaluable combination.

A third way concerns maps. The drug map represents a more or less extended geographical area and presents a collective picture of the traffic in drugs. It has been our experience that considerable may be accomplished with maps. The Pharmacognosy Museum contains an habitat case holding some two hundred samples of crude drugs, each sample being attached by means of a streamer to its locality on a large world map. Various other cases in the museum contain small maps illustrating particular features in the traffic of the drugs displayed.

Our laboratory manual in Pharmacognosy is of the loose leaf type to facilitate its being combined with the laboratory notes and drawings. Into this manual we have inserted six outline continent maps, corresponding in size to the pages of

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the manual. The continent maps are preferable to a single world map in that crowding is eliminated. As each drug is considered its habitat is briefly discussed, taking into consideration the country yielding it together with its cultivation and commerce. The student enters the habitat in his notes, at the same time indicating its location by printing or writing the name of the drug on the proper map.

This method at once accomplishes several things. The maps give the student a graphical picture of pharmacognostical and ecological distribution over the various parts of the earth. His interest in geography is renewed as he sees its connection with other divisions of learning, particularly his chosen profession. He begins to accept a collective picture in which several relationships are orientated. His general knowledge is increased. His interest is stimulated. And finally, he retains his habitats with much less effort because he has diverged from the forceful mechanical association of terms which mean little more to him than combinations of letters, to a logical method of proper association.

The question naturally arises as to the value of habitats. They comprise but a minor part of pharmacognostical instruction and undue stress should not be placed upon them, especially at the expense of other more valuable instruction, yet, as has been explained, they offer a link in the association between pharmacognostical and other knowledge. They comprise, therefore, a division which the teacher should not overlook, in his effort to create interest in his subject. After all, when pharmacy goes before the public annually during Pharmacy Week, what is the center upon which the great majority of displays are built? The drug map.

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Should students who have not had a thorough course in physiological chemistry be taught one phase of it, such as urinalysis? To-day the physician is not satisfied with urinalysis alone, but he usually wishes a more complete analysis involving blood analysis, gastric analysis, etc. However, there is still perhaps a demand in certain localities for the pharmacist who is able to do simple urinalysis. If so, then such a course should be offered in the college of pharmacy. The following paper by Professor Greene and a discussion by Professor Gershenfeld will be of special interest to the instructor who is called upon to offer a course in urinalysis.—C. B. JORDAN, *Editor*.

### TEACHING URINALYSIS TO STUDENTS OF PHARMACY.

BY ANTOINE E. GREENE.\*

Perhaps this paper should be prefaced with an apology. If the present and future curricula in pharmacy are to be governed by the stern mandates of the Fourth Edition of the Pharmaceutical Syllabus, there will be no place for a course in Urinalysis, and this paper will be but a reflection of the ancient history of the subject.

It is the prayerful purpose of this paper to utter a protest, to enter an appeal. There is always the fundamental need for the consideration of local situations. In this period of tremendous transition in our education methods, we should be governed by the rule of curricular elasticity. While, in the main, we should attempt a firm adherence to unified basic and professional subjects, we should have open minds to receive and understand a "theory of elasticity" in the setting up of elective

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