

THE ASSOCIATIONS, THE COLLEGES, AND THE BOARDS.

BY W. H. COUSINS.

Upon these three institutions depend the progress and success of pharmacy. They have for constituents the best and most capable men of the craft. They are the three legs of the tripod on which pharmacy stands. In view of the fact that the calling is dependent upon them for support, counsel, and for the shaping of its destiny, it is necessary that there be maintained the closest of relations between them, and the efforts of each body should be reciprocal. Coöperation is essential for the best interests of every member of the profession. The making of a pharmacist may be likened unto the making of a piece of merchandise, in that the one aim a manufacturer has in view is to produce a product that meets every demand made by the man who buys it. The college of pharmacy represents the manufacturer in whose plant raw material is transformed into a finished product. The boards of pharmacy are nothing more or less than censors, inspectors who pass on the product of the colleges. The state associations being made up of the pharmacists of the country represent the ultimate buyers of the product of the colleges. The state associations made up of the buyers of the product made by the colleges and passed on by the state boards must be satisfied. Though, if the product is not satisfactory, then the schools are not alone to blame because the state board licensed the applicant and placed its O. K. on the product of the college. Thus it at once becomes apparent that a standard of efficiency should be established.

The requirements of this standard should be suggested by the association members who are to pay the salaries of the students we license. They should let us know what they want. They should make their specifications of what a pharmacist should be, plain and easy of understanding. The druggists of this country are the people we must please, because they are the ultimate buyers of our product. A student may pass the college censor, he may pass the state board, but he has not met his most critical examiner until he stands before the man who is to sign his pay-check. There is a great need of a standard of efficiency among the pharmacy boards of the United States.

The requirements of the different state boards are at great variance, and the requirements for graduation in the different pharmacy schools are not the same. Owing to this state of affairs, the term "Registered Pharmacist" may have as many meanings as the word "professor," from which we understand that the bearer of the title may be a famous teacher of science, a pianist in a shady restaurant, or the owner of a snake show. Under present conditions, "Registered Pharmacist" is a very vague term. There are too many standards and too little uniformity in the requirements of both the schools and the boards.

If a druggist ordered boric acid and was unable to get two cartons that were the same, he would have just cause for complaint against the manufacturer. Then, if from looking over a dozen applicants for places in his store, he finds a wide range of difference in their qualifications, he has a cause for complaint against the boards and the schools, because they are all under the same label and should be uniform. We find young men who go to an adjoining State to be examined for license to practise pharmacy and ask for reciprocity back to their native States rather than take the examination from the boards in their own

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States. We see students who fail in one school and are sent home taken up by another school and graduated. These conditions work to the detriment of pharmacy. Our standards need standardizing.

Solomon's problem of ascertaining which woman the baby belonged to was an easy one compared to the one a druggist has in telling what will be sent him when he orders a registered pharmacist. Something must be done by the boards and colleges to define the term. An employer of pharmacists has a right to know, when he asks a board or a school to send him a registered pharmacist, whether he will get a pink canary or an ostrich. He has a right to know whether the specimen will be merely a tangled mass of legs and arms or a man whose head is working.

We believe the boards are responsible for most of the inefficiency of the druggists of to-day. We believe there should be a national standard established to which examinations should be made to conform. We believe there should be an elimination of obsolete drugs. We require applicants to give the habitat, part employed, dose, and therapy of drugs that have not been prescribed since the Civil War. We require them to know intimately drugs and preparations of drugs that they will never hear of after they leave the examination room. Many of our boards still grill the applicants on botanical drugs that are practically unknown to the modern physician and are unused in this age of the world, and overlook entirely the domain of serum therapy. This is a wanton waste of time and effort, and, so far as fitting himself for the practice of modern pharmacy is concerned, the applicant might as well be trying to bail the ocean with a one-drachm graduate.

We believe that the boards should see that the applicants are qualified to practise the pharmacy of to-day and not the pharmacy of a score of years ago.

An applicant may know more about sarsaparilla root and cinchona bark than Mr. Gillette knows about safety razors, but when asked to prepare some of the newer materia medica for intravenous or intramuscular administration he will find this information about as valuable to him as a pharmacy certificate would be to a bricklayer. Many boards admit that the world moves, but these same boards will submit an examination that no more applies to the demands of modern pharmacy than the Edict of Nantes applies to the city government of San Francisco. The colleges and the boards should see that when an applicant is given his clearance papers he will fill the bill; in so far as qualification is concerned, when he hangs his gold-sealed parchments up in somebody's store.

A long term of years in the retail business has taught the writer that the qualifications of no craft of workers on earth are quite so uncertain as the qualifications of the men we decorate with authority to practise pharmacy. This is not the fault of the men, but rather the fault of the boards. So long as each board has a standard of its own there will be no way to determine what a man's qualifications as a pharmacist will be. We urge that the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, in addition to promoting a model pharmacy law, make a concerted move toward standardizing the examinations. Boards should not concentrate on fig leaves, as they have not been used since Mother Eve allowed them to go out of style in Eden. They should not ask an applicant to name the constituents of Warburg's tincture, giving the amount of each necessary to make a pint, because there is not a man outside of the "nuttery" who can give this from memory. Many a qualified pharmacist has failed because he was unable to write a chapter about some obsolete plant that flourished as a specific during the days of our grandfathers. Others have gone down in defeat because they could

not record the constituents and state the use of Brown-Sequard's anti-epileptic mixture, when there are probably not half a dozen men on the American continent who can remember the ingredients, and, so far as telling what it would be good for, we have never found anybody who would even venture a guess.

Schools and boards should be more practical. An applicant should be taught and required to know the things that will enable him to earn his salary and serve the world in the important capacity of pharmacist. He should be taught the processes of combining remedial agents that are in vogue to-day. Pharmacy is a practical science that has to do with modern problems, the solutions to which are to meet modern demands, and not a school for the study of the ignorance of former ages. Faculties and boards should coördinate their work. It would be better if they could agree to eliminate all obsolete, unofficial drugs, and not require applicants to give habitat, Latin official name, and synonyms of so many vegetable drugs that are no longer used. The applicant will have all needed practical knowledge if he limits himself to the official ones. We do not mean by this that all unofficial drugs or preparations of drugs should be left out.

The time we save from discontinuing the study of the therapeutic antiques, especially of botanical drugs, should be devoted to the newer materia medica. The wonders of serum therapy are beginning to loom up before us, and the treatment of disease by injecting solutions directly into the blood are of daily occurrence. The ever-restless trend of science is forward. The unsleeping eye of ambition is ever peering into the dim distance of the future in quest of a possibility that experiment may transform into an achievement.

We must keep up with the wizards of our day. We dare not stop to quibble over our yesterdays, lest we find ourselves lost in the trash heaps of things that were. We hope to see the colleges, the boards and the associations combine in an effort to bring pharmacy up to a uniform standard, thus making "Registered Pharmacist" mean the same thing in every State in the Union.

THE TRUE AIM OF SCIENCE.

The true aim of science, expressed in a word, is to increase the self-consciousness of man. We have emerged from lowly forms of life where self-consciousness is almost, if not quite, non-existent. Each advance has been in the direction of the acquisition of a greater degree of self-consciousness. Long ages ago man commenced to distinguish himself from the trees and stones about him. He began to form a picture of his universe and of himself as related to that universe. His consciousness grew: he distinguished between one tribe and another, between one family and another, between one individual and another. When Copernicus propounded his theory that the earth revolves about the sun, he altered, at one blow, man's conception of the relation between himself and the universe. Man saw himself more clearly: he was no longer the miraculously unique creature he had supposed himself to be. Darwin, with his origin of species, effected another great change in man's estimate of himself. Again man's self-consciousness, his conception of his relations to everything outside himself, acquired an extension and intensification. The main function of philosophy has been of the same kind, and it is interesting to note that it is now thought that the true significance of art is to be found in the same direction.—*From an editorial in Scientific American.*
