

EDITORIAL

E. G. EBERLE, Editor

253 Bourse Bldg., PHILADELPHIA

PHARMACY ACKNOWLEDGED AN "ESSENTIAL SPECIALTY" OF ARMY MEDICAL PRACTICE.

THAT pharmacy is an "essential specialty" of Army Medical Practice has been acknowledged by the provision of a "pharmacy war course" for the Students Army Training Corps. Reports bearing on the subject will be found under "Correspondence." A number of schools are now engaged in educating and training several hundred young men in pharmacy according to a program which has been determined upon as best adapted for the needs of the Army. The subjects in which the enlisted men adopting this course are to be instructed include the branches taught in schools of pharmacy and, in addition, a study of War Aims and English Composition, and First Aid training.

Prior contention has been that pharmacists, as such, were not needed for the Army; they were not placed in the deferred classes nor assigned to duties for which they were qualified by education and training. Draft boards now may defer their enlistment if the needs of the community require that this be done, and further deference has been shown by giving enlisted men the opportunities of an education in pharmacy. These acts indicate a change of viewpoint relative to pharmacy or a conviction that pharmacists have in the past not been given due consideration.

If these courses had not been opened to prospective pharmacy students there would have been further grounds for criticism, and hence this argues that the action of the Committee on Education and Special Training deserves commendation. It must be borne in mind, however, that many pharmacists, as highly trained as the enlisted students will be, were not given the opportunity to serve in the positions for which they were specially qualified. It is clearly evident that very high appreciation of pharmaceutical attainments has been lacking, and the question of rank still remains, even for those who complete the "pharmacy war course." It is to be hoped that the indorsement given to pharmacy as an "essential specialty" of the Army medical practice will prompt the organization of a pharmaceutical corps as part of the Medical Department of the Army.

There is little satisfaction in the fact that in England about the same conditions obtain as in this country; there are, however, indications of improvement. A recent letter to the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain from the Director General of the British Army conveys the information that an Army Council instruction is to be issued embodying the principle of placing a pharmacist in charge of the dispensary of hospitals, and "it is hoped" that pharmacists thus posted will be given the rank and pay of sergeants. The question of higher rank

"is still under consideration." The same letter states that "arrangements have been made to enlist into R. A. M. C. all qualified pharmacists who may in the future be called into service."

When a pharmacist enters the Army and performs the duties of a pharmacist then certainly the service rendered by him is professional, and the fact that in many drug stores pharmacy is a small part has no bearing on the question of his rank or professional standing. The educated pharmacist would gladly discard most of the side-lines if the pharmacy would produce a sufficient income. Medical men usually have more influence with legislative bodies than druggists, but they seldom give strong support to the persistent efforts of pharmacists to secure legislation that will require graduation from a college of pharmacy as a prerequisite to practice pharmacy. If all states had "prerequisite" laws, then progress toward higher qualifications for pharmacists would naturally follow. Medicine will take a long step forward after the war, and it seems highly important that there be closer coöperation of the medical profession with pharmacy and more helpful encouragement given by the Government in order that an American materia medica may be further developed. With the beginning of the war our dependence on Europe for drugs was realized; pharmacy measured up to its responsibilities under trying discouragements and difficulties. The efficiency with which the drug industries met every demand made upon them has received favorable comment. As far as we know, there has been no attempt at profiteering and the Schools of Pharmacy or members of the faculties aided in one way or another in the maintenance of proper drug supply, or in training men for dispensing or hospital service.

There is a place for the drug store among our commercial activities and there is a real need for pharmacy. Theoretical ideas that pharmacy can at once be separated from the drug business should be absorbed by the purpose to provide greater and better opportunities for its practice. This cannot be done by discouraging those who earnestly seek to develop pharmacy and place it on a higher plane, nor by permitting merchants, on the one hand, to sell drugs without restrictions, nor, on the other, have physicians dispense medicines, which in many localities has made it absolutely impossible to carry on a pharmacy.

The progress of pharmacy is largely dependent upon medical practice and, reversely, the advancement of the latter will be sustained by progressive pharmacy. Every activity is endeavoring to profit by the lessons of the war, and the blood and treasure so lavishly poured out will have been in a measure wasted if humanity does not profit and benefit by the experience and knowledge gained on the battlefields and in the hospitals from the treatment of injuries and diseases and a study of the action and production of prophylactic and remedial medicinal agencies.

We are pleased that the indorsement has been given to pharmacy, by the

Committee on Education and Special Training, and hope that there will be a further expression of confidence in its possibilities resulting in the establishment of a pharmaceutical corps as part of the Medical Department of the U. S. Army.

E. G. E.

THE SPANISH INFLUENZA.

IT MAY not be out of place to record in these pages a reference to the prevalence of influenza which has recently become epidemic in many sections of the United States and has prevailed in Europe for a number of months. The death rate in some localities has been seven times that of normal and the number of cases correspondingly large. Frederick E. Niece, a member of the Association residing in Queens Village, Long Island, died of the disease, which he contracted while experimenting to obtain a preventative serum. Death claimed quite a number of physicians and pharmacists. Unfortunately numerous remedies were suggested for the treatment of the infection, the chief object being the profit on the sales. The spirit of real helpfulness, however, largely predominated.

At the Phipps Institute, Philadelphia, the influenza germ was identified by Dr. Paul A. Lewis as Pfeiffer's bacillus, while Dr. Randle C. Rosenberger, bacteriologist at the Jefferson Medical College, has not been able to find the distinctive influenza germ. His finding seems to agree with that of Dr. Ulrich Friedemann, of the Virchow Hospital, Berlin, Germany; he had not found the Pfeiffer bacillus, streptococci and pneumococci being the most common agents of the complicating pneumonias. Dr. Richard Pfeiffer, Breslau, reported the finding of his bacillus in only a few cases.

It is conceded by a number of bacteriologists that the symptomatology and complications of the present epidemic correspond with those of 1889-90. Pfeiffer's bacillus was discovered in 1892. Dr. Kolle reported from Frankfort under date of July 18 that up to that time he had failed to detect Pfeiffer's bacillus in any of the cases he had examined. In practically all cases there were found, however, large numbers of a Gram-positive coccus—often in a pure culture or in symbiosis with pneumococci. The diplococci tended to develop involution forms and to grow in very large chains in the condensation water. He regards them as agents of a secondary infection in the Spanish influenza which he states *may* not be identical with the pandemic influenza of 1889-1893.

E. G. E.

CONDITIONS AFTER THE WAR.

IT CAN safely be said that the beginning of the end of the war is at hand. Matters affecting the drug business quite naturally enter into a discussion in this JOURNAL, of conditions after the war. Immediately after the beginning

of hostilities prices of nearly all drugs advanced, and as a result, an inventory of the average drug stock would have shown a large profit on the investment. The druggist who did not mark up his retail prices in response to the rising market lacked judgment, for such reasonable action could not be construed as profiteering. With the return of peace prices will decline, and it behooves dealers now to buy cautiously. As the value of drug stocks was increased by higher prices the inventories following the conclusion of peace will, in many instances, indicate a loss, for which those who have invested the profits of preceding years in Liberty Bonds will be prepared.

During the war period the cry has been shortage of help; hereafter for a time there will likely be an over-supply, and this may prove more disadvantageous than the previous condition by bringing about a return of unnecessary overhead expenses which were eliminated because employees could not be secured and, realizing this, the public did not complain though deprived of conveniences to which they had been accustomed. Extravagance is recognized as an American failing; we have willingly made sacrifices for the sake of winning the war; most of those who enlisted for the cause of the country did so with becoming patriotism; our soldiers suffered privations and hardships, without complaint; they endured their losses as heroes; but it is doubtful whether the lesson of thrift has been deeply impressed.

We owe a duty to those who served the country and the world; opportunities of education and employment must be given them when they return to civil life, and the drug stores of the country should bear their obligations in this respect in mind. The Government required many thousand employees in the war industries, who will be released, and they, too, have a claim on the public and must not be permitted to remain unemployed.

The return to peace conditions signifies a reconstruction period during which it has been said the mettle of America will be put to a test much more severe than that of the war, in which the armor of right and justice will protect us and only the might of mind will prevail. Of this period Dr. B. C. Hesse said in a prepared address for the Philadelphia Section of the American Chemical Society:

"In the tense industrial, commercial, and financial world-wide struggle that is bound to ensue directly after the close of hostilities, success will in all probability fall in a greater measure to those who have, in advance, prepared a comprehensive workable plan adapted for immediate development and operation, and sufficiently elastic to allow of effective adaptation to changing or unforeseen conditions, than to those who have not so prepared themselves."

The United States has shown its ability to save a world from autocratic and **military** domination; after peace is established her statesmen, financiers, business men and educators must show their ability to comprehend a vast and compli-

cated situation, to devise measures and supply means to master, control, guide and shape industrial and educational affairs so that the country will hold its front rank among the nations of the world.

Successful competition by the United States with other nations seeking markets for their products will compel the adoption of more scientific methods than have in the past obtained, and to this end the Department of Commerce will become more important and extensive as a source of industrial data for business and manufacturing interests.

Scientific management has been developed as a result of the war and closer contact between labor and capital is now more highly valued. The wonderful achievements of this country would have been utterly impossible without the really big men with these views, who developed the conservation and production plans which with the other equally important promotions enabled the United States to change the course of events in Europe. In the reconstruction following peace it is important that Capital have the viewpoint of Labor and reversely and, above all, that the principle of brotherhood, "Do as you would be done by," be accepted and more generally applied among nations and individuals.

E. G. E.

CALOMEL ASSAY (U. S. P.) IMPROVED.

BY A. B. LYONS.

The U. S. P. assay for calomel is neat and often expeditious. Sometimes, however, the calomel is exceedingly slow to dissolve in the prescribed volumetric solution. Increasing the quantity of the iodine solution helps materially. As much as 75 mls of the solution may be advantageously used in place of the 50 mls prescribed.

The difficulty is, however, wholly overcome by the simple expedient of doubling the strength of the reagent. It is as well to prepare a special volumetric solution by dissolving in 50 mls of water 13 grammes of iodine and 20 grammes of potassium iodide, adding a solution of 80 grammes of potassium iodide in 150 mls of water and making up with distilled water to 500 mls, or a little less. Standardize to a fifth-normal strength on an accurately standardized tenth-normal sodium thiosulphate solution.

In the assay use 0.5 Gm. of the dried calomel, 5 mls of water and 20 mls of the reagent, with no additional potassium iodide. Solution of the calomel will be effected in a few minutes. Titrate the residual iodine with tenth-normal thio-sulphate solution, remembering to reckon the quantity of iodine solution as equivalent to 40 mls of a tenth-normal solution.