

EDITORIAL

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THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY IN WINNING THE WAR.

THERE is a disposition among some army medical men, and others, to underestimate the importance of pharmacy, and yet they must admit that pharmaceutical skill and knowledge are significant in the treatment and surgical procedure for the rehabilitation of their patients. In civil practice some doctors prepare and dispense the medicines employed by them, but even then the constituents or finished preparations are made by pharmacists. Such practitioners assume privileges for which they are unwilling to grant druggists the reciprocity of counter-prescribing, and rightly so. Two wrongs never make a right.

In providing a reliable materia medica for the medical profession pharmacists perform a responsible and inherent duty. They are willing to work in their particular sphere of activity; they do not expect undeserved distinction, but they fail to appreciate why the degree of their importance should now be less, when the exigency for the kind of service they are qualified for is greater. Reason indicates to us that the functions of pharmacy have not changed, but simply have not been adapted to our military organization. Dr. Philander P. Claxton, U. S. Commissioner of Education, said in an address last month that the greatest danger to the Allies is not in the exhaustion of man power but the loss of technical and scientific men. Because there has been no provision in the Army for pharmacists, in the capacity for which training and education have qualified them, many have secured commissions in other departments of the Service, and thus the ranks of available pharmacists have to that extent been depleted. It is reasonable to assume that unless provision is made for them, those in the succeeding drafts will do likewise. It is admitted that if commissions are granted to pharmacists it will improve the general status of pharmacy, but surely this is desirable and in the interest of public health.

The devotion of medical men speaks for their splendid citizenship, but there is a serious doubt as to whether the Medical Department will be able to enroll a sufficient number of doctors for the needs of the growing army unless the services of pharmacists are utilized. Preparedness has attained to a higher valuation than formerly. Pharmacists desire to help in winning the war as loyal citizens and as participants in the best medical service possible for the men engaged in making the world a safer and better place to live in. They contend that organized pharmaceutical service is essential to the Medical Department of the U. S. Army because there is an interdependence between medicine and pharmacy. Even in

civil life this has not been strongly enough impressed nor fully appreciated by either profession. Pharmacists on the one hand realize that compelling necessity has added many non-pharmaceutical lines to the drug stocks, and this makes them reluctant in vigorously asserting their rights to professional recognition, notwithstanding that the services rendered by them are so determined by law and practice, the Government in its several departments and the medical profession by accepting of their products and standards. Physicians, on the other hand, are not fully responsive to the claims of pharmacy, chiefly because of the conditions in the average drug store; their perspective is the stock, whereas it should be the department and the service which is concerned with and contributes to the progress of medicine.

Development proceeds along the lines of least resistance, and hence the conditions of pharmacy are responsive to environments, but this should not inhibit coöperation of physicians and pharmacists in efforts which, if successful, will unquestionably redound to the advance and benefit of both professions. Medicine can only hope to continue its forward strides if pharmacy is progressive, and if the services of pharmacy are not most efficiently utilized now, when it seems almost imperative that they should be, both professions will suffer as a result, after the war. The future progress of medicine is largely dependent on that of professional pharmacy, and the sooner the interdependence and interrelation of these professions is recognized the better for them and for the public. Disparagement to the least of these will do damage and injury to both.

The armamentarium of the doctors has been made possible by pharmacists and is a prerequisite in the successful treatment of the sick and wounded. Pharmacists have, under trying conditions, solved the problems of drug production and supply; their suggestions in a number of important matters have been accepted and practically applied by the Government; they have loyally and patriotically given their money, time and places of business for carrying into effect the beginnings of several of the great preliminary promotions of the country; they have labored under difficulties to meet the demands for medicines; they have cheerfully accepted restrictive buying and selling orders; relatively more reports whereby they might be and are taxed were required of them. They are convinced by past military history and knowledge and the experience of other countries that properly organized pharmaceutical service is essential for the Medical Department of the U. S. Army.

There is a possibility of bringing pharmacy into more active and efficient coöperation with medicine for the common weal of the men in arms. Medical men can convert the possibility into achievement if they are sincerely desirous for the advancement of pharmacy. They have heretofore voiced their support; will they now more actively impress their views and aid in the endeavor to es-

tablish an organized Pharmaceutical Corps as an integral part of the Medical Department of the U. S. Army? Thereby they will advance professional pharmacy—one of their often-expressed desires—and bring into more hearty accord the efforts of physicians and pharmacists in purposes for which they are united, but above all they will render an invaluable service to the soldiers and to the enlisted medical men.

E. G. E.

THE PREPAREDNESS OF PHARMACISTS FOR SERVING THEIR COUNTRY.

HERETOFORE references have been made to suggestions and resolutions offered by Branches of the American Pharmaceutical Association, which were of such value that they were subsequently embodied in related war measures.

On May 18, 1917, President Frederick J. Wulling, of the American Pharmaceutical Association, addressed His Excellency, President Wilson, as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT: As president of the American Pharmaceutical Association and with the concurrence of Mr. Lewis C. Hopp, Cleveland, Ohio, chairman of the Council of the Association, I hereby pledge the loyal support of the Association and tender to you and the Government such services as the Association can give in the present crisis of the country. Many of the members of the Association have already offered their individual services, but the Association may be able to give a service as an organization. It is ready and willing to help the country in any way it can and holds itself in readiness to be advised by you or by your orders.

President R. A. Lyman, of the American Conference of Pharmaceutical Faculties, addressed the President in a communication of May 1, 1917, wherein it was more specifically stated how this body could be helpful to the country. The letter reads:

MR. PRESIDENT: The Executive Committee of the American Conference of Pharmaceutical Faculties, representing forty leading Colleges of Pharmacy of the United States, has authorized me to inform you that the services of the schools belonging to this Conference are at your command. This organization wishes to render to the country any and every possible service. Some of the special services which these schools can render are suggested below:

1. The manufacture of pharmaceutical preparations, official or non-official, in such quantities as the Government needs.
2. The microscopical and chemical examination of purchases of crude drugs, for the purpose of identification, and the detection of adulterations.
3. The physiological and chemical standardization of medicinal products.
4. The manufacture of medicinal synthetics.
5. The chemical, microscopical and bacteriological examination of food-stuffs.
6. The supplying of crude medicinal plants, such as Digitalis and Belladonna, which are now on hand, or are now growing in our drug plant gardens. The latter will be available this fall.
7. The growing of crude drugs upon a larger scale than is now attempted and the supplying of information or trained men to those who wish to engage in the cultivation of medicinal plants.