

The National Guard under certain conditions becomes an actual portion of the United States Army, and the above arguments apply with equal force to its members, hence the pharmacists of the whole country are deeply interested. This matter is a serious one, for even during actual hostilities more men die in the United States Army from sickness than from the missiles of the enemy, which shows how very important is the promotion of the efficiency of the Hospital Corps.

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#### BETTER PAY DESERVED BY THE ARMY HOSPITAL CORPS.

"The decline in efficiency of the Hospital Corps of the United States Army has been made the subject of an official report by the surgeon-general to the chief of staff. As a result, the American Pharmaceutical Association has taken up the cause of the military pharmacists and proposes to urge legislation which will increase the efficiency of the Hospital Corps, in accordance with the recommendation of the surgeon-general. The functions of this corps range from those of kitchen helper to those of the trained nurse; it includes the pharmacist, clerk, photographer, ambulance driver and orderly. The nursing of the sick, the sterilization of instruments and dressings, the compounding of medicines—all the details of an intricate system of property accounting and sick records are in the hands of the members of the corps. They are the only nurses at army hospitals, except at four or five general hospitals in the United States and in the Philippines.

"The federal government is under a moral, if not a legal, obligation to furnish efficient and capable nursing and pharmaceutical service to the army. The government should also set an example in the organization and service of its hospitals. The sick soldier should not be left to the untrained and incompetent. From the privates of the Hospital Corps are drawn its non-commissioned officers. If the privates are not carefully selected men of education and reliability, the non-commissioned officers will not be much better. Supervision of military hospitals, the sick, the attendants and the equipment requires no slight qualifications. When to this is added proficiency in pharmacy, nursing and minor surgery it is evident that the government must offer better inducements if it expects to obtain men with the necessary ability.

"The Army Pay bill of 1908 gave increased pay to the various grades, averaging 40 per cent and in some cases as high as 80 per cent increase. It gave the Hospital Corps not more than 20 per cent increase, thus placing it at a decided disadvantage in attracting the best class of privates. All the branches of the army are practically in competition with one another for educated and reliable men. The more intelligent the man, the more carefully he considers and selects the branch of service which offers the best inducements in pay and in opportunity for advancement. In these respects, the Hospital Corps today is the lowest of any branch of the service.

The Surgeon-General of the Army submitted a memorandum to the Chief of Staff, August 3, looking to a modest increase in the pay of the Hospital Corps, an increase rendered necessary by the practical impossibility of obtaining men of any description for this branch of the service. The surgeon-general is held responsible for the health of the army and the efficiency of its medical service.

His opinion is that of an unprejudiced expert. The Chief of Staff of the Army, himself a trained physician of no mean professional attainments, will, we hope, agree with the surgeon-general. There should be no opposition from any quarter to legislation that would remedy an obviously dangerous condition. The American Medical Association, no less than the American Pharmaceutical Association, is interested in the needs of the Hospital Corps of the Army and its members should give such assistance as is in their power to aid in the passage of a bill increasing the pay of the Hospital Corps."—*Jour. Am. Med. Association*.

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## DRUG QUALITY DURING THE PERIOD 1906-1911.

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We have felt that statistical data, based on a continuous examination over a period of six years, of three of the principal crude drugs used in this country, might prove of interest to chemists in view of the growing importance of the Pure Food and Drugs Act. For this reason we have collated the results of the assays and tests of these drugs we have made in the laboratories of Sharp & Dohme during that period of time and present them in this paper. The quality of the wild-grown plants depends largely upon atmospheric as well as upon soil conditions of the country where grown. Thus it is pointed out by a large German drug house that not much could be expected from the forthcoming crop of drugs, inasmuch as but little snow had fallen last winter in Europe, that the roots had in consequence been exposed to severe cold weather, and suffered from lack of moisture in the spring; added to this came an extremely hot almost rainless summer in which the growth of the surviving plants was greatly retarded. As but few crude drugs are cultivated as yet anywhere in the world, these uncertainties in extent of crop, and quality of product will continue until such time as raising crude drugs will become as much a business as raising cereals or fodder. The efforts now being made by the Bureau of Plant Industry of the Department of Agriculture under the capable guidance of Dr. Rodney H. True will, if continued, soon make this country more or less independent of other countries in many drugs as well independent of failures of crops or poor climatic conditions. We cannot refrain from expressing the hope that something be done to eliminate the largely used drug Golden Seal from the itching palms of money lenders, because it can truly be said of this drug that it is in the hands of a trust and an unscrupulous one at that. To think of being compelled to pay four dollars and more a pound for a wild and freely growing plant indigenous to this country when it can easily and profitably be raised for less than a dollar a pound, only accentuates the fact that the Sherman law may even be made applicable to crude products of nature. Below follow the results obtained by us in the examination of samples of the drugs offered us by dealers and gatherers in this and other countries.

The samples of *Aconite Leaves*, a drug which is very seldom used, and which, consequently, has been deleted from the U. S. P., showed up very well, only one