

THE PASSING OF THE PH.G. AND PH.C. DEGREES.*

BY L. E. SAYRE AND C. FERDINAND NELSON.

Within the past few months a decision has been reached by a body of University men which bids fair to be of momentous consequence to the profession of Pharmacy. Already a number of faculties have approved the action of the Committee on Academic and Professional Degrees of the Association of American Universities which recommends that degrees be abolished for all college courses not requiring at least four years of work for graduation. The Ph.G. and Ph.C. degrees both come under the ban of this recommendation and may therefore in the future possibly cease to be recognized as degrees in the sense in which the term is employed by college authorities and members of the profession.

What attitude should pharmacists take toward this proposed action?

At first, it appeared to us ridiculous that any committee should attempt to refuse to recognize degrees such as the Ph.G. and Ph.C., both of which are now so well established and in fact as established as the degree of M.D. We are sure that the majority of pharmacists will resent it as we did. And yet, on closer study the reasons behind the committee's action appear to be fundamentally sound and in a sense inevitable, owing, particularly, to the fact that the scientific developments of the past century have multiplied infinitely the amount of information that a professional student must acquire before he can be considered as at all competent. The amount of cultural work required for admission to professional courses is also constantly on the increase.

Medicine and dentistry have both recognized these modern demands and have as a result increased their courses proportionally. We have not materially changed our curriculum and very probably we are not ready to do so at once.

We should, however, admit the reasonableness of the committee's recommendation. It would be of immense value if our state boards of pharmacy would recognize a certificate guaranteeing the same amount of work as at present our degrees do, and then it would matter little, for practical purposes, whether a certificate or diploma be granted; for, if the committee's recommendation should finally pass, and our schools of pharmacy should continue to issue diplomas on a basis lower than that recognized by reputable universities and other professional schools, it will, as we view it, only tend to lower the standing and dignity of the profession. No pharmacist wants more than he has earned, and if it is to be the consensus of opinion of the large majority of university faculties that a degree shall represent at least four years of college work superimposed on four years of high school attendance, then we should reserve our degrees for the four-year pharmacy course and issue certificates for the Ph.G. and Ph.C. courses. How far the majority of retail druggists, upon whose decision this finally rests, will support this matter remains to be seen.

*EDITOR'S NOTE:—As indicated by the authors, the abolishment of the Ph.G. and Ph.C. degrees will find strong objectors, but it is also pointed out that action has already been taken in the matter and therefore the subject should be brought to the attention of the Association, the American Conference of Pharmaceutical Faculties, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy and pharmacists generally.

That the preparatory and professional training time for pharmacists must be increased if we hope to hold our own with other professions cannot be denied. Whether more time should be given to liberal training or to added professional courses is becoming a question of paramount importance. This is made especially evident by the recommendation of the above mentioned committee.

We wish to make it clear that we recognize the value, force and dignity which the Ph.G. and Ph.C. degrees have had and what they stand for. No possible action on the part of any body in the future can in any way detract from or diminish the value of the degrees already conferred. But, if, as we have supposed and which now appears possible, a degree shall be defined as consisting of nothing less than four years of college work, then unless these degrees would represent the same amount of training their value is bound to deteriorate. It is on this basis that we would finally be forced to urge the substitution of a certificate for a diploma.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE IN MILITARY MEDICINE.*

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The domain of Military Medicine is a blend of three major components or subjects: medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, with sanitation and hygiene essential factors of each; veterinary surgery is a branch. As to which one of these three departments of human welfare effort shall be esteemed paramount, there may be justifiable variants of opinion. There can be no question but each is on a practical par with the others in the objects they aim to achieve.

The first line of defense is the Medical Corps, for the reason that they pick the fighting men as no others can. Without this critical selection there would come together a mere herd of dubious candidates—most expensive by reason of potential defectives and dependents. The second line of defense we may safely claim is also that of the military surgeons because theirs is the responsibility of putting these men in conditions of highest efficiency, of keeping them there, of forefending them from all preventable decrepitudes, of repairing them when damaged and of restoring them to the trenches, of reducing to a minimum their dependence upon either the Government pay rolls or the public charge. Can you beat that for a man's sized contract?

In the process of preventing the preventable depreciation of life and vigor and fighting power, the Medical Corps must qualify as ceaselessly vigilant, first-class experts in testing all suspicious objects, sources of lurking perils among which are drinking water, foods, soils, infective agencies, environments, climates, dwelling or sojourning sites whether outdoors or indoors or in a ship. There is included demand for expertness in chemistry, in bacteriology, in all the departments of clinical laboratory proficiencies. The time and strength and multi-

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