

# Confederate Veteran.

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## SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE SOUTH DURING THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES.

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### Medicine

The paucity of the supply of medicine, consequent to the blockade, caused much distress. Quinine was quoted at \$60 per ounce in 1862 before the great drop in Confederate currency. Medicine was so scanty that the people concocted many substitutes.

Berries of the dogwood tree were taken for quinine. A cordial was made from blackberry roots for dysentery and similar ailments. Ripe persimmons were used for the same purpose. An extract of the barks of the wild cherry, dogwood, poplar, and wahoo trees were used for chills and agues. For coughs and lung diseases, a syrup was made with leaves of the mullein plant, globe flower, and wild cherry tree bark. Poppies were grown to make opium, from which laudanum was made. Sometimes in malarial districts the balls of the button willow of the swamps were used for quinine. Surgeon General Moore, of the Confederate army, gave out, as a substitute for quinine, a recipe for the mixture of dried dogwood, dried poplar bark, and dried willow bark, together with whisky, to be macerated for fourteen days.

Physicians charged \$30 a visit. Nurses were not always available. During the war only two colleges continued their medical courses. The Medical College of Virginia made an energetic effort to meet the demands of the time, and upon it rested the main burden of supplying physicians, for the University of Virginia, not being so well equipped, graduated but a few doctors.

Surgical instruments were also unattainable at times. One observer tells us that he saw a Confederate surgeon "break off one prong of a common table fork, bend the point of the other prong, and with it elevate the bone in depressed fracture of the skull and save life." Smuggling of medicinal supplies was carried on. The government attempted to relieve the situation by establishing factories for medicinal supplies at Columbia, S. C., Mobile, and Montgomery.

The scarcity of medicinal supplies tested the ingenuity of the medical profession. The number of wounded soldiers placed a heavy burden upon them. The needs of the civil population were a cause of concern too. Smallpox was very aggressive in Richmond, and a serious epidemic of yellow fever in Wilmington was combatted only with difficulty. Notwithstanding the obstacles, the medical profession faced their task in wartimes with fortitude and were a cause of just pride among the people of the South.