

## SCIENTIFIC SECTION

### THE PHARMACOPŒIA OF THE UNITED STATES.\*

BY E. FULLERTON COOK.

Pharmacopœial interests at this period of the decade are likely to be at low ebb, as the book has settled into its place, and, without special emphasis, is quietly fulfilling its intended function.

It is at this stage of its life, however, that those who use it daily are most likely to discover methods or technique which do not fully meet the requirements or which may be advantageously replaced by a new or modified test.

When such is the case the Committee urges the prompt report of the facts, either directly to the Chairman or in a note or paper before an ASSOCIATION meeting, that it may find its way into the literature and be made available for the next revision.

*The Digest of Comments.*—As already announced, the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION has agreed to include in the "Report on the Progress of Pharmacy," as printed in the Annual YEAR BOOK, abstracts of all references to Pharmacopœial subjects appearing in current literature, thus replacing the "Digest of Comments," now discontinued.

The 1926 volume of the YEAR BOOK will be the first in which special emphasis has been placed upon this class of abstracts and the plan seems to have special merit as, in large measure, a duplication of effort is avoided.

*The New Spanish Edition.*—The outstanding feature of the year in the Pharmacopœial field has been the appearance of the U. S. P. X in Spanish. This had been prepared by a Committee from the University of Havana consisting of Dr. C. Garcia Morales, *Chairman*, Dr. A. Mesa de Ponce, *Secretary*, Dr. Rosa T. Lagomasino and Dr. Sara Bastillo. Dr. José G. Diaz, who had translated the two previous editions, was unable to assume full responsibility for the translations because of ill health, but gave invaluable assistance in proof-reading and advice to the translators.

The official agent for the distribution of this Spanish Edition is the International Trade Papers, Inc., 2 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y. This firm are the publishers of *El Pharmaceutico*, a pharmaceutical journal in the Spanish language, circulating in all Central and South American Republics.

The retail price of the book, without postage, is \$6.00.

Recognition of the appearance of this Spanish Edition was taken at the recent Pan-American Congress, at Havana, by means of a resolution.

Also through the joint action of Dr. Cumming, as Director of the Sanitary Bureau of the Pan-American Union, and the Board of Trustees, complimentary copies of the book are being presented to the libraries of the main Health Bureaus of all of the Central and South American Republics.

While the publication of the Spanish edition of the U. S. Pharmacopœia, now for three revisions, has been without monetary profit it has been a valuable service to our own Spanish-speaking colonies and to the Republic of Cuba, where it has

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\* Scientific Section, A. P. H. A., Portland meeting, 1923.

been accepted officially. But it has also received very general distribution in the Republics of the Pan-American Union and should be a potent influence on this continent in establishing a greater degree of uniformity in the strength and nomenclature of standard and medicinal products, than would be otherwise possible.

*The U. S. P. Exhibit at the A. M. A. Meeting.*—The Board again authorized a U. S. P. Exhibit as a part of the Scientific Section at the A. M. A. meeting. This year it was held at Minneapolis and Dean Wulling and his associates were asked to prepare and take charge of the Exhibit.

The success of this exhibit has been fully reported in the pharmaceutical press,<sup>1</sup> and should encourage many pharmacists throughout the country, to make similar displays, especially if they are desirous of emphasizing their professional qualifications and of interesting the physicians of their community.

#### U. S. P. RESEARCH.

The special researches, planned over a year ago by the Executive Committee of Revision and approved and financed by the Board of Trustees have been making excellent progress.

While these studies have not been completed, it is expected that all will be finished and reported upon before the next U. S. P. Convention. In fact partial reports on some studies will be made this winter. The studies now under way are as follows:

*The Assay and Variation in Strength of Strophanthin and the Digitalis-Group of Drugs.*—Directed by Dr. C. W. Edmunds, of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

*The Absorbability of Mercurial Ointments.*—Directed by Dr. Torald Sollmann, of Western Reserve Medical School, Cleveland, Ohio.

*U. S. P. Solubilities and Alkaloidal Standardization.*—Directed by Dr. George D. Rosengarten.

*Comparison of Chemical Tests and Assays.*—Directed by Prof. H. V. Arny.

*Color Standards for Solid Substances.*—Directed by Prof. E. N. Gathercoal.

*The Determination of Alcohol-Extractive.*—Directed by Prof. E. N. Gathercoal.

*Solution of Magnesium Citrate.*—Planned and Directed by George M. Beringer.

*Fluidextracts of Ipecac, Cinchona and Squill.*—Planned and Directed by George M. Beringer.

#### OTHER RESEARCHES.

Many other studies of interest to the Pharmacopœia are now under way chiefly through industrial laboratories or voluntary workers. A study of the long list of pharmaceutical subjects now under investigation, as recently published by the National Conference on Pharmaceutical Research will reveal many subjects which have a direct bearing upon the U. S. P. revision.

There might specially be mentioned a *review of crystallographic terms* now used in the Pharmacopœia which has been undertaken by Prof. E. H. Kraus, of the University of Michigan.

*A study of all U. S. P. petroleum products*, especially with reference to their physical factors and tests, is under the direction of a Sub-Committee of the American Society for Testing Materials.

<sup>1</sup> See JOUR. A. PH. A. for July, 628.

*An Investigation of the Ergot Assay.*—Dr. Nelson, of the University of Michigan, has been directing a study on this subject under a Fellowship established by the Upjohn Company.

A comparative study of assay methods is also being carried out on Fluidextract samples by the Hygienic Laboratory under Dr. Voegtlin's supervision, and on the same lots of Fluidextracts, by the Pharmacologic laboratory of the Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration at Washington.

These various reports on the Ergot assay should be of inestimable value to the next committee.

*Cod-Liver Oil.*—Dr. John F. Anderson is preparing a summary of the *situation* as it influences Cod-Liver Oil standards and Assay. This should serve as a basis for additional studies on this question when another committee is organized.

*Histologic Terms.*—Prof. Youngken and Prof. Wirth are coöperating in a study of histologic terms employed in foreign pharmacopœias for the purpose of unifying and harmonizing the terms and definitions employed by our pharmacopœia.

*Foreign Pharmacopœias.*—That important developments in recent foreign pharmacopœias may be made available for the next committee or for the actual comparisons of tests and methods at this time, translations have been made of the general articles and some other portions from the Swedish, Dutch and German Pharmacopœias and these are being published in the official Circulars. As other foreign Pharmacopœias appear they will be similarly treated.

#### GEORGE M. BERINGER.

The recent death of George M. Beringer has left a vacancy in revision work which cannot easily be filled. The versatile character of his knowledge and training, his willingness to devote energy and time to the technical and scientific problems of pharmacy and his unbounded faith in the importance of pharmaceutical service, were large factors in the contributions he has made for over a period of at least thirty years. He will be greatly missed in all pharmaceutical circles and especially in Pharmacopœial work.

#### NEW MEMBERS.

The death of Dr. Henry Beates, Jr., about a year ago left a vacancy in the physicians group of the Committee and, as has been the custom and as authorized by the By-Laws of the Convention, the Committee has just voted for two new members. I have the pleasure and privilege of announcing the election to the Committee of Revision, of Dr. J. Leon Lascoff, of New York for the vacancy in the pharmaceutical group. Dr. Lascoff is too well known here for any introduction. The vacancy in the physicians' group has been filled by the election of Dr. John Phillips, an experienced and well-known internist, especially interested in therapeutics. Dr. Phillips is now associated with the Cleveland Clinics, Cleveland, Ohio.

As the end of the decade approaches there will doubtless be increased interest in Pharmacopœial work and it is hoped that the A. PH. A. Committee will again bring many valuable suggestions for the improvement of the next Pharmacopœia.

Now is the time to plan this program and for the purpose of bringing an unbiased viewpoint to the Revision, the members of the A. PH. A. Committee should not be members of the U. S. P. Revision Committee.