

II. The preparation of a solution of fresh sulphurated potassa in water. Strange to say, *the solution* of this unstable chemical *is very stable* and the writer takes pleasure in exhibiting specimens which are one and two years old respectively. The chemical is almost completely soluble in two parts of water, but for convenience the author is in the habit of keeping in stock a solution four volumes of which represents one part of potassa sulphurata. The preparation and keeping of such a stock solution for the quick and proper preparation of Lotio Alba has been kept quite a secret, a so-called professional secret, by the pharmacists who are favored with the prescriptions of dermatologists. The writer, who believes in the motto, "To give and take pharmaceutical knowledge," takes pleasure in herewith presenting this "secret" method for the benefit of his brother pharmacists.

DISCUSSION.

In reply to a question by Mr. Fennell, as to whether, in these dark preparations, the zinc sulphate contained any iron, Mr. Raubenheimer replied that the black color was probably due to the presence of ferrous sulphide. The sulphurated potassa contained iron due to the fact that the manufacturer made it on a large and cheap scale. He merely melted his potassium carbonate and sulphur together and poured it out into an iron tray, and it would be noticed in one of the samples passed around that it was yellow on one side, and on the other side was black. Without filtering the solution, a gray precipitate would be had. He had filtered it, with the result as shown.

H. A. B. Dunning, of Baltimore, said that in his establishment they used much the same method as Mr. Raubenheimer had outlined for preparing solution of sulphurated potash. To insure the strength of the sulphide solution, they selected that portion of the sulphide which was yellow. He had found it necessary to keep the substance tightly stoppered, otherwise there was more or less change in the condition of the sulphide. It seemed remarkable that there were in the United States, in any of the cities from which these samples came, concerns that would send out such products as were to be seen on the table before the members. He thought it was not expressing it in language too strong to say that it was a disgrace that this should be true.

Mr. Raubenheimer stated that these samples came from all parts of the country, some from New York, some from Brooklyn, and some from Philadelphia; but none had come from Baltimore. nor had any come from Cincinnati.

A PRESCRIPTION AND A QUERY.

A. W. BENDER, DETROIT.

The following prescription was compounded by a local pharmacist:

R	Atropinae sulphat004
	Argenti nitrat1
	Bismuth subnitrat	5.
	Magnesii oxid	5.

M. et div. in pulv. No. XV.

Sig.—One powder after meals and one an hour later.

During the first day six powders were taken according to directions and no ill effects were experienced. On the second day after having taken two powders in the morning, the patient began to feel dizzy and noticed that the pupils of his eyes were greatly dilated. An overdose of atropine was suspected and he stopped

taking the powders, but during the remainder of that day found it very difficult to read or to use his eyes in any way.

The following day the prescription was compounded in this laboratory using an analytical balance, sensitive to 1/600 grain, to weigh out the ingredients. After resting a day the ill effects experienced from the powders put up by the local pharmacist had entirely passed away and the patient began taking the new powders. He took them for a week according to directions and they caused no ill effects.

The difference in the action of the powders led to an investigation. Mr. W. M. Jenkins of this laboratory, who is thoroughly familiar with alkaloidal assays, analyzed the powders and found 1/100 grain Atropine Sulphate in each powder instead of approximately 1/250 grain which the prescription called for. This showed that the patient was getting the maximum dose of atropine sulphate instead of the prescribed minimum dose.

The facts in the case were presented to the pharmacist and inquiry was made as to the method used in compounding the prescription. It was found that he had weighed 1/16 grain atropine sulphate on a Torsion balance and had rubbed it up with the other ingredients. He stated that it had always been his practice to weigh out such small amounts on this balance and he believed it to be sensitive to this amount. After a short discussion he decided that thereafter he would use Dispensary Tablets or Tablet Triturates, in a prescription of this kind.

What is the correct way to compound this prescription providing there is no analytical balance at hand? Ought a pharmacist to have an analytical balance?

SCIENTIFIC LABORATORY, PARKE, DAVIS & Co., Detroit, Mich.

DISCUSSION.

G. F. Payne, of Atlanta, said he had occasion to use the prescription balance a great deal, as he had found it out of the question to use the analytical balance in many cases. It was too delicate, and had to be adjusted each time it was used. To weigh out whatever quantity the balance was accurate for, and then divide it very carefully by the eye, would be found to be a very accurate method when done properly.

C. T. P. Fennell, of Cincinnati, thought there was no trouble with the balances on the market, but where pharmacists did make a great mistake was, that they would shove their balances around from one place to another, and did not keep them properly leveled.

W. C. Alpers, of New York, thought the analytical balance should not be used in the drug store, as it required too much adjusting. It took a great deal of experience to weigh accurately upon it, and it was not expected of the average pharmacist that he should have the deftness to be able to handle it.

I. A. Becker, of Chicago, said he would like to bear testimony to the various weighings that could be made on a scale by not having it perfectly level. He had found that the ordinary box prescription scale, not furnished with a leveling device, would not do on the prescription counter, as its sensibility was very much affected by its being out of level.