differ materially in their content of a potent drug, there arises the danger of overdosage, due to the patient becoming accustomed to a weak preparation, and later being furnished with a stronger one, and not knowing of the change, continuing the same dosage. Even if no actual danger were the result of this, the different strengths of the various preparations dispensed under the same name, results in uncertainty of effects, and a consequent loss of faith by the prescriber in the efficacy of drugs, and may be a leading reason for the abandonment of their use.

In favor of making our own preparations it may be said:—first, in most instances there is a material saving in the cost; second, preparations can be made in such quantities as are justified by the demand, so that they are less likely to become deteriorated by reason of age; third, if U. S. P. and N. F. formulæ are followed, the lack of uniformity due to varying private formulæ, however good the latter may be, is obviated, and identical preparations will be dispensed everywhere; fourth, this is a part of true pharmacy, which no man who loves his profession would willingly abandon.

No doubt other reasons, both *pro* and *con,* will occur to the minds of my auditors, but I have said enough to show that there are two sides to this, as there are to most questions.

SOME PHARMACEUTICAL NOTES.

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Oleate of Mercury, U. S. P.:—This when kept in glass ointment jars for a month or more, will discolor on the top. By covering the surface of the oleate with distilled water and adding hot paraffine until a thin layer is formed when cold, the oleate can be kept for a long time without change.

Spirit Etheris Nitrosi:—Practically, all of the Spirit of Nitre dispensed by pharmacists, is made by diluting one pound of the concentrated spirit with twenty-one pounds of cooled alcohol. This concentrated spirit is very volatile and boils at about 63° F., and unless manipulated very carefully some of it will be lost by evaporation. This loss can easily be avoided by cooling both alcohol and concentrated spirit, inserting a champagne tap in the cork of the nitre bottle, attaching a glass tube to it by means of a small piece rubber tubing and, after inserting the glass tube in the alcohol, opening the cock of the champagne tap and inverting the nitre bottle. If a hole is made in the stopper of the alcohol bottle and the glass tube snugly fitted into it there will be no loss. The writer believes that faulty manipulation is the cause of so many samples of Spirit of Nitre being reported below standard by the inspectors.

Fowler's Solution —This preparation is made by boiling arsenic trioxide and potassium bicarbonate in a concentrated aqueous solution until the arsenic is dissolved, adding the remainder of the water and the color.

The U. S. P. says that when pot. bicarb. is heated to this temperature, it is converted into the carbonate which is more alkaline than the bicarbonate and consequently it dissolves the arsenic more readily. This being true, why not use the carbonate in proper amount instead of the bicarbonate?

In making syrup without heat, if the water is added to the sugar, lumps form which are hard to break up; if the sugar is added to the water with continuous stirring, after a part of the sugar has been added, the solution becomes somewhat viscid and the last of the sugar will ball up and float and it requires a great deal of stirring to dissolve it, but it has been observed that if all of the sugar (free from lumps) is poured into the water without stirring, the greater part will be dissolved and no lumps will be found either on the top or bottom, and that the excess on the bottom can be easily dissolved by stirring a short time. Much time and labor is saved by this method, where large quantities are made.

In very hot weather, such as is often experienced in the South, it is impossible to dispense Zinc Oxide Ointment and Belladonna Ointment when made according to the U. S. P. formulæ in a solid state. The U. S. P. should permit the addition of from 5 to 10 *per cent.* of white wax in the summer time.

A sample of citric acid was purchased which formed a yellow solution when dissolved. Analysis showed a large amount of iron present.

Below are given two incompatible prescriptions with criticisms:—

℞ Strontium Bromide..... 4 drams
Mixt. Rhubarb and Soda, q. s. ad..... 3 ounces
Misc.

When the strontium bromide was added a strong effervescence occurred and carbon dioxide was given off freely. This was caused by a reaction between the strontium bromide and the sodium bicarbonate in the Mixture of Rhubarb and Soda which formed sodium bromide, carbon dioxide and water and precipitating strontium carbonate, according to the following equation:—

$$SrBr_2 + 2NaHCo_3 = SrCO_3 + 2NaBr + H_2O + CO_2$$

The gas was allowed to escape before bottling and a shake-label attached.

℞ Tr. Ferri Mur..... 1 ounce
Dil. Phosphoric Acid..... 1½ ounces
Syr. Hyphophosphites (Churchills), q. s..... 1 pint

However mixed there was produced a heavy gelatinous white precipitate of Ferric Hypophosphite with perhaps some calcium phosphate. By using the Tinct. Citro-Chloride of Iron a precipitate is avoided and a yellowish transparent solution is produced.

When sifting tartaric acid or beta-naphthol, great annoyance is often experienced by the powders irritating the skin. By applying talcum powder freely to the face and hands the trouble may be avoided.

Tinct. Iodine applied to a silver nitrate stain on the skin, followed by an application of ammonia water, will change the stain from black to white and it will be removed.

Peroxide of Hydrogen, applied to a stain of ferrous iodide on the skin, will liberate the iodine, making a red stain, a mixture of dilute acetic acid and sodium hyposulphite will instantly remove this.