Editorial Notes and Announcements

E. G. EBERLE, Editor.....Columbus, Ohio

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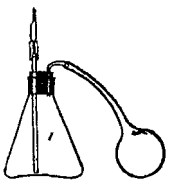
THE FILLING OF AMPOULES.

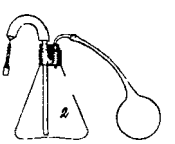
Herbert Skinner, in the Pharamceutical Journal and Pharmacist, describes his method for filling ampoules, which may be adopted in any pharmacy.

The ampoules are boiled in distilled water twice, of course using fresh water each time. He suggests that a supply of ampoules after the second boiling should be kept filled with distilled water, ready for an emergency order. The apparatus for filling is constructed as follows: No. 1, an Erlenmeyer flask of 125 mils is fitted with a rubber stopper, having two perforations; through one is inserted an ordinary glass canula, through the other is passed a piece of glass tubing to the bottom of the flask and projecting about one inch above the stopper. A piece of thick-walled rubber tubing is slipped over the end. Attached to the canula is a single bulb bellows, of which the valve end has been blocked to prevent ingress of air. The whole is fixed on a retort stand over a spirit lamp. This serves for filling Ophthalmic ampoules.



For the bottle style, replace the small piece of thick-walled rubber tubing by a piece about seven inches long, and in the end insert a piece of nickel tube, two inches long, with a bore about that of an ordinary exploring needle. In filling, the ampoule mouth is inserted over the nickel piece and pulled over, so that the rubber tubing forms a half circle; pressure is applied to the bulb; then with the left hand withdraw the ampoule and release the pressure with the right. This will clear the mouth of the ampoule and enables sealing to be done without risk of fracture to the neck.

A second piece of apparatus is described for removing traces of water and consists of a single bellows bulb with the end blocked as before and a nickel piece fitted into the tube, which is attached horizontally to the upright of the retort stand; the mouth of the ampoule is pushed over the nickel tube and sufficient pressure exerted on the bellows to blow out the water.



After sealing, the ampoules should be ster-

ilized for half an hour at 80° C. Mr. Skinner states that for this purpose they use a wire basket which replaces the dish in the water-bath, a cover is placed over it to keep in the steam. Sterilization will soon show whether the ampoules have been properly sealed or not.

Mr. Skinner concludes by saying that he has tried many methods, automatic and otherwise, but this system is preferred by him.

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WHAT IS A DRACHM?

We are glad to publish the following comment by Mr. M. I. Wilbert on the editorial under above caption in the August issue.

Our intention was not to do Dr. Alsberg an injustice, but simply followed the lines of the paper presented at the meeting of the Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association. We were not aware that manufacturers had made use of a term, practically obsolete, in order to create an impression of greater weight. We still contend that it is an easy matter to do away with several of the values given to the term referred to. We maintain that it would be advantageous to have only one "dram" and that the value of it be sixty grains, to be designated as the English translation of the Latin, drachma.

We thank Mr. Wilbert for his communication, which follows:

"I had intended to call your attention before to the editorial in the August number of the Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association, headed, "What is a Drachm?" As I read this editorial it is not quite fair to the Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry. It would appear to intimate that the promulgation of the ruling that a dram is to be considered as the sixteenth part of an avoirdupois ounce is an arbitrary decision on the part of Dr. Alsberg, the Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry, whereas in fact it is nothing more than a recognition of existing law and the legality of practices that are admittedly designed to mislead. Unfortunately, perhaps, the weights and measures amendment to the Food and Drugs Act specifies that the weight of an article must be given in avoirdupois pounds or fractions thereof, or in the metric system. Now it appears that many years ago, when the avoirdupois pound was recognized by law as the official standard, the recognition involved all of the fractions of the pound then in use in England. The avoirdupois dram never even excited academic interest in this country until after the adoption of the weights and measures amendment to the Food and Drugs Act, when some clever or well-posted manufacturer discovered that seven drams would look infinitely more impressive than one-half ounce. This practice was early adopted by several manufacturers and when investigated by the Bureau of Chemistry it was found that the people using the word "dram" has ample authority at law for doing so and the ruling referred to was published primarily as a warning or as information that the practice of misleading purchasers by the use of the word "dram" was spreading rather rapidly. The only thing that pharmacists can do and should do is to differeniate between the Pharmacopœial or apothecaries' "drachm" and the avoirdupois "dram" so as to establish the difference between them. Further than this you may be interested in the fact that this controversy over dram and drachm is developing an interest in the metric system and some manufacturers, at least, have adopted the metric system for stating the weight of materials contained in a given package. M. I. WILBERT."

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COLOR VARIATION AND PRECIPITATION IN TINCTURE OF NUX VOMICA SOMETIMES DUE TO AMMONIA.

Thomas Latham has communicated the following:

F. W. Nitardy in July issue of the Journal of the A. Ph. A., mentions variation of color in tincture of nux vomica from a rich brown made with U. S. P. extract, to straw color when made by diluting fluidextract.

The most recent powdered extract does not give a rich brown but a color nearly that which Mr. Nitardy takes exceptions to. Improvement in vacuum apparatus has enabled manufacturers to produce a light gray extract, whereas formerly it was a coffee brown. The caramelization would naturally reduce the alkaloid content and be a financial loss, as it is necessary to bring the extract up to U. S. P. strychnine standard. Observing precipitation in a batch of tincture made with the newer extract, I conferred with the manufacturer whose chemist suggested that it was due to the ammonia present in the air of the filtering room and that the addition of nitrohydrochloric acid would re-dissolve the precipitate. This accidental contamination doubtless lead Kennedy (American Journal of Pharmacy) to conclude that ammonia was found in the tincture per se as he found strychnine in the precipitate. I have found 1 to 500 of the acid sufficient to clear the tincture, when a slight precipitate is found upon standing two or three weeks.

DR. PAUL EHRLICH.

The rank of Dr. Paul Ehrlich will be undisputed by physicians and the laity, and pharmacy willingly accords him honor for establishing chemotherapy.

The side chain theory offers an explanation of the chemical production of antitoxins, and hence the phenomena of immunity to disease.

Ehrlich discovered the parasite "spirochaete pallida" while experimenting with dyestuff on the different tissues of the body and after many failures, indicated by the number given to Salvarsan, found the specific which, even without his many other discoveries, entitles him to highest distinction.

Dr. Ehrlich died August 20 at the age of sixty; as we count time, a comparatively short life, but in achievement and usefulness his months had the value of years. E. G. E.

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DR. CHARLES J. FINLAY.

Pharmacy honors the memory of Dr. Charles J. Finlay, and the United States and the world have profited, in conservation of life and time, by values that cannot be estimated. Others of course contributed by sacrifice and application to the potential discovery of the transmission of yellow fever, but the demonstration of Dr. Findlay's theory vanquished the "terror of the tropics" and connected the "great oceans."

Dr. Finlay, aged 81, accompanied Dr. Ehrlich, August 20, to the place of rest, from where we hope they may observe the results of their labors and fortunate discoveries and be gratified by the world's beneficial application of them. E. G. E.

Necrology

JOHN ROEMER.

John Roemer, President of the New York Branch of the American Pharmaceutical Association, was born in New York in 1873 and died in the White Plains Hospital, White Plains, N. Y., on August 20, 1915, following an operation for gall-stones.

Mr. Roemer received his early education in the public schools of New York and was graduated from the New York College of Pharmacy on reaching his majority. After taking a post graduate course in Columbia University, he engaged in the practice of pharmacy in New York for six years. He then removed to White Plains where he soon established an enviable reputation for the excellence of his prescription work.

The nostrum had no place on his shelves. It was largely through his activity, and that of his friend, John McCullough, of White Plains, that the Westchester County Pharmaceutical Association became one of the strongest of local organizations. Mr. Roemer was elected president of this organization and was thereafter re-elected for three terms. He became particularly interested in propaganda work for ethical pharmacy, and was made Chairman of the Propaganda Committee of the New York State Pharmaceutical Association, serving as such until one year ago.

He became a member of the American Pharmaceutical Association in 1910, and in 1914 he was elected to the presidency of the New York Branch of the American Pharmaceutical Association. He became widely known as a staunch advocate of ethical pharmacy, and there was scarcely any line of pharmaceutical activity with which he has not been identified during the past score of years. It is stated of him that "Many of the theories and policies which Mr. Roemer advocated several years ago have since been followed with incalculable benefit to the profession at large. Of poetic mien and a constant theorizer, he had his practical side, and most of his suggestions and recommendations for the good of pharmacy had a sound foundation on common sense and practicability."

Mr. Roemer had strong civic pride. He was prominent in the politics of his city and county. He was a member of the Board of Water Commissioners of White Plains. He was a charter member of White Plains Council, Royal Arcanum, and an active member of the Business and Professional Men's Association of White Plains. He was also a member of the Faculty of the Jersey City College of Pharmacy. Although never elected to office in the national pharmaceutical organization he served on a number of committees.

Among his contributions to the literature of pharmacy which he furnished in recent years may be mentioned a paper which was published in the August (1915) issue of the "Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association" entitled "The Science of Phe-