EDITORIAL

E. G EBERLE, Editor 253 Bourse Bldg., PHILADELPHIA

THE NINTH REVISION OF THE UNITED STATES PHARMACOPŒIA.

SEPTEMBER 1 has been named as the date when the Ninth Revision of the United States Pharmacopœia will become official. While the time intervening is a shorter period than obtained between the dates of publication and official designation of previous revisions, comparatively few additions were made to the materia medica of the Ninth Revision, and most of these are supplied by manufacturers and wholesalers. Wide publicity has been given to the changes made in the Pharmacopœia, so that everyone deeply interested should be informed, and it is safe to say that on September 1, drugs and preparations according to the U. S. P. IX will be obtainable. The fact is, that with very few exceptions, the drugs, chemicals and preparations that have been on the market conform to the standard. To some extent it may be necessary to modify the statement relative to drugs, but this is largely due to the unfortunate conditions that have obtained during the past two years; still it is safe to say that standardized drugs are obtainable, and the preparations of American manufacturers conform to the official requirements. Conclusively the pharmacists who recognize their responsibilities are now supplied with official materia medica. That there must and will be some allowance made, on account of the practical impossibility to supply everyone requiring a Pharmacopœia, is becoming very evident.

It is a remarkable fact that many pharmacists never read the introductory notices of the Pharmacopœia, nor give attention to Part II. In the present Revision, the latter contains very important matter and perhaps more of what is really new than Part I. Every pharmacist should devote study to both of the sections referred to—necessity will compel reference to the other portions of the book.

By looking over the list of additions and deletions and the tables of changes in standards, pharmacists will soon know whether their stock conforms, and what they must do in order to bring it to the requirements of the present Revision.

A number of titles have appended the capital letters P. I., an abbreviation signifying that the preparation or drug conforms to a standard or strength agreed upon by the Brussels Conference. As quite a number of reviews relating to the new Pharmacopœia have appeared, and one is in this issue of the JOURNAL, and also because reference is made in these papers to the International Protocol,[1] and for the further reason that several communications have reached the editorial office asking for information relative to this agreement, the conclusion has been reached to explain with some little detail the purpose of such international agreement.

[1] Applying deductions from the definition of the word, the Protocol may be defined as a document signed by authorized representatives of the governments entering into an agreement, whereby it is sought to secure uniform standards for materia medica.

The European war has very strongly emphasized that nations are interdependent. We obtain our supplies from every section of the world and hence must have knowledge of the crude and manufactured products in order to provide standards. The application may be extended by alluding to the fact that distances are only relative, and people of one country travel in the lands of another. For these reasons the making of a national pharmacopœia requires international coöperation.

The Protocol may be said to be the practical substitute for an international pharmacopœia. As one of the important results of the conference in the City of Brussels, September, 1902, the Eighth Revision of the United States Pharmacopœia adopted a 10 percent strength for the tinctures of potent drugs. It will be remembered that this meant quite a decided change in the strength of a number of tinctures, notably of Veratrum, Aconite and Strophanthus.

The title adopted by the international pharmaceutical congress is, Conference Internationale pour l' Unification de la Formule des Medicaments Heroiques, hence it will be seen that the prime object was simply to unify the strength of preparations of potent drugs. In order to do this, the very natural sequence was to standardize the drugs. There has been more or less deviation, and extension of the idea which called together this important committee. Commissioners in the Conference and signators to the agreement, Protocole Internationale, represented practically every European country and the United States. The agreement entered upon September 20, 1906, provided for certain uniform rules to be applied to potent remedies and then these were enumerated and defined. The statement shows the progress from preparations of drugs to the inclusion of standards for the latter. Mr. George M. Beringer in his paper points out the necessity for some changes or exceptions to the general rules of the Protocol. Before the Protocol was signed on the 29th day of November, 1906, reservations were made by several governments; the statement on the part of the United States was that by signing the agreement, no further duty was assumed than that of trying to bring the ninth revision of the United States Pharmacopœia into harmony with the propositions adopted.

Article 2 of the Protocol provides that wines shall not be made of potent medicinal substances. With this the U. S. P. IX has complied by excluding all medicated wines, and the same authority also observes the other two demands, namely, for 10 percent tinctures of potent drugs, and fluidextracts representing the drugs in the proportion that already obtained in the last Revision.

The Pharmacopœia has a table which gives information of relative strengths in the two standards, which makes such detailed reference here unnecessary. The suggestion of using 70 percent alcohol as a menstruum was not generally adopted for the very good reason that the same solvent is not advised for radically dissimilar drugs. The purposes of the Protocol having been stated and historical references briefly given, a few further remarks bearing on the Ninth Revision will conclude this comment.

Even now, it is more or less difficult to refer to important changes without

repeating what pharmacists have already said about the new standard, but we await with interest the expression of the medical press.

The Pharmacopœia provides standards and, in doing so, includes some descriptions and tests that are more particularly intended for manufacturers and importers. The descriptions of microscopic structure and characteristics of the powdered drugs, and some of the physical tests are important and valuable additions, which, while they may not be made use of by many pharmacists in the conduct of their business, represent the advanced thought and embody the latest methods of standardization and examination. The usefulness of the Pharmacopœia has been largely enhanced by the additions and improvements of Part II. The information supplied there should give the book a more extended use in the laboratories of medical and pharmaceutical schools; the inclusion of explanatory remarks and instruction in the details of manipulations really adds text-book value to the Pharmacopœia. E. G. E.

THE NATIONAL FORMULARY, FOURTH EDITION.

IT will become very evident that there are many more decided changes in the National Formulary, Fourth Edition, when comparison is made with previous revisions, than in the ninth revision of the United States Pharmacopœia. The fixing of September 1 as the date when this Revision shall become official would then seemingly provoke more objection than the adoption of that date for the new Pharmacopœia, as legal standard. The publication of the Formulary has, however, advanced further so that the supply of books will soon equal the demand.

Many of the changes in the National Formulary, Fourth Edition, were compelled by the recognition of authority in the Food and Drugs Act and State laws as legal standard, for up to this revision the book had been largely a formulary compiled for the convenience of pharmacists, and of course, with the idea in mind of providing uniformity in the included preparations, and of preserving the formulas that had been deleted from the Pharmacopœia. Endowed with the titled dignity of a legal standard, it became mandatory that such acceptances be based on a stronger claim than deletion from the Pharmacopœia alone. This assignment as guardian of said formulas will hereafter be largely delegated to the A. Ph. A. Recipe Book.

It is not the intention of this article to review the National Formulary, Fourth Edition, for this has been done by others, and in this issue of the JOURNAL will be found such a contribution by W. L. Scoville, vice-chairman of the National Formulary Committee of the American Pharmaceutical Association. The scope of the Pharmacopœia is controlled, at least largely so, by therapeutic considerations, while that of the National Formulary is as extensive as medical usage, and the formulas are prepared in accord with good pharmaceutical practice. In conformity with the latter view several preparations were deleted from the National Formulary, namely, because they were pharmaceutically unsatisfactory.

In revising the National Formulary the general principles followed in pharmacopœial revision were adopted. While the term mil is used in the formulas, the denomination milliliter has been retained in the text and as an equivalent in the formulas, so more correctly stated, milliliter has a preference. The metric sys-

tem is used throughout. A calculation method for converting metric valuations into apothecaries weight and measure is included.

The National Formulary, Fourth Edition, resembles the Pharmacopœia in general make-up and typography, and the nomenclature also is in accord with that standard. Part I contains the formulas, Part II provides standards for drugs used in the preparations of Part I, and Part III includes special tests and reagents.

After the Committee on Standards was appointed by the American Pharmaceutical Association the value of their work as a part of the National Formulary under revision was recognized, and admirably perfects this standard. Doubtless there are defects, but these are not very serious; in fact, those of reference are of standards for drugs subject to change, such as valerates, for example, where the chemical formula is given, without directing attention to the liability of change in constitution. Also such slight discrepancies as, for instance, the uniform designation of the source of angelica fruit and angelica root.

A point worthy of comment is the interest and devotion to duty of those who labored in the perfection of both the United States Pharmacopœia and National Formulary, truly a commendatory spirit of altruism that speaks volumes. It evidences that pharmacy is worth while, or certainly such painstaking effort would not obtain, when there is no pecuniary reward. The labor should bespeak the approbation of those who benefit thereby. It is noteworthy that in the preparation of both these standards members of the American Pharmaceutical Association are the principal participants, and those who are not share equally in the honors of the accomplishment—their credit is no less. The National Formulary is published under direction and authority of the American Pharmaceutical Association and naturally the members of the organization do the work. In continuing and providing this standard the pharmacists of the country acquire a resource and guide that would be impossible except through a coöperative organization, deeply and sincerely interested in the welfare of pharmacy. It is true that the Association is recompensed for its constructive work, and for incurring business risks, but this is necessary for the perpetuation of the standard; provision must always be made for the succeeding revision; there is also the desire of providing for more research work in pharmacy, which will contribute to better standards and better pharmacy. An individual or an organization may be altruistic and still not accomplish anything worth while. The success of such moving spirit is accentuated when there is preliminary action that produces the means for doing something and conserves these forces for continued or further activity. Like service, altruism has quality. If all druggists, who are beneficiaries of the work done by the Association, through its members, would enlist in the organization, the benefits accruing to all would be multiplied.

As the title of "Aristocrat Among Pharmacopœias" has been given to the United States Pharmacopœia so also is the National Formulary, Fourth Revision, an accomplishment in which the revisers may well have pride, and the assurance of having done most excellent service for pharmacy and those who are served by its votaries, the physicians and laity.

These statements would be incomplete without reference to the valuable and

constructive assistance rendered by the Hygienic Laboratory, United States Public Health Service, in compiling the Digest of Comments on the United States Pharmacopœia VIII and the National Formulary III. This service was not only very helpful but the thoroughness and completeness with which the work was done deserves appreciative mention. It might also be added that the continuation of the work will proceed by preparing similar digests of the present revisions of both the Pharmacopœia and National Formulary.

Constructive criticism makes for improvement, so the JOURNAL welcomes articles that point out defects and present progressive ideas, to the end that each revision will be an improved edition of those that have preceded. E. G. E.

THE ATLANTIC CITY MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

THE passing of time has brought another annual convention of the American Pharmaceutical Association near. A record of sixty-four years of work for American Pharmacy, shaping and directing the trend in so far as this was possible during this period, leaves the Association with a history in which the members have a right of pride and satisfaction. Though slow of growth, there is a slight annual increase of membership, and this year the number of new members has at this writing reached 353 and the anticipation of receiving 500 is possible. Why the additions to the membership of the Association should not show a larger increase remains one of the problems that has occupied the minds of members throughout the period of its existence, and so also the incentive which should hold them as members continuously.

The one thought that many druggists cannot appreciate sufficiently is, that pharmacy demands an organization of this kind; a body that gives thought to the professional side of the drug business, however much there is need for increasing the volume of business by sales of items more or less distantly related to pharmacy. While the American Pharmaceutical Association does not lose sight of such necessity, and provides opportunities for the discussion and development of such live topics in several of the Sections, its mission as the representative of American pharmacy cannot be neglected. Neither would this be the desire of the members nor even of those who are not affiliated. The latter are satisfied to let others do this necessary work and feel assured that there will always be a sufficient number, who are imbued with a spirit of altruism and devoted to the cause of pharmacy. This is the unfortunate situation, which is by no means peculiar to those engaged in the drug business. A survey of the promotions in every city will corroborate the statement; the delinquents are not invariably those who are unable, but quite as frequently men of means. This would apply to the Association if twice the value received would be turned back to those not interested, unless of course the come-back would be in actual money. There is absent in them that altruistic spirit which persuades the doing for others without return; their vision is obscured.

Fortunately there are many who are constituted otherwise, or a Pharmacopœia

or National Formulary would be a far more difficult undertaking, and the transactions of the American Pharmaceutical Association would be devoid of the valuable papers that speak for the true spirit of helpfulness to others. Neither is it possible to overcome the critical inclination, or rather hypercritical, for by this is meant that which is destructive and not constructive. This, too, everyone realizes and permeates everywhere. Within the Association there is little evidence of this trait, for those who continue their membership from year to year share with their associates the same determined purpose of accomplishing something that contributes to the welfare of the many, regardless of whether those outside of the Association profit by their efforts; in fact, they rejoice because they have been able to be of service. If this trait could be conveyed to more the numerical strength of the Association would be increased, and less would become delinquent; the thought of a direct return must be eliminated and that of service and coöperation substituted. The one who joins for a material benefit seldom persists—membership is not a good financial investment on such basis only, but if the affiliation is accompanied by a desire to be helpful and to sustain pharmacy which dignifies the aspirant's occupation, then the returns are indeed ample. It is difficult to approximate the value of the work done by the Association, the results are evident in every walk of life, whether social or commercial.

As an example of the beneficial influence of the Association, the interview of Chairman S. L. Hilton of the Committee on the Status of Pharmacists in the Government Service with the Secretary of the Navy, referred to under Editorial Notes, may be cited. As a result an order was issued to strike out the age limit as one of the requirements for eligibility to examinations for the grade of Pharmacist in the U. S. Navy. Nineteen Hospital Stewards will thereby have an opportunity for advancement.

The meeting in Atlantic City promises to be well attended, and Local Secretary Charles Holzhauer has the program, both of entertainments and conduct of the meeting, nearly completed. In this issue will be found tentative programs of all the Sections and sessions of the Association; also of the meetings of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy and the American Conference of Pharmaceutical Faculties, to be held in Philadelphia, preceding the convention of the American Pharmaceutical Association in Atlantic City, September 5–9.

The completion of the United States Pharmacopœia and National Formulary, both of which become official September 1, 1916, will doubtless furnish interesting subjects for discussion. The interest along this line will be further enhanced by the address of Dr. Solomon Solis Cohen on "The Pharmacopœial Revision from a Medical Standpoint," or a related subject. All those who attended the Boston meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association will remember his splendid effort on that occasion.

The programs of the Sections speak for abundance of work and excellent opportunities for a profitable meeting; and so far as the entertainments are concerned, the main difficulty will be in escaping from the many attractions provided by the Committee, and ever present in this popular resort.

E. G. E.