

The course in plant chemistry, as a whole, has been found most useful. It is interesting; it is practical from the standpoint of both chemistry and pharmacognosy, and it carries with it more of general culture than almost any other course in the curriculum.

ALCOHOL—ITS FUTURE.*¹

BY A. B. ADAMS.²

One of the subjects uppermost in the mind of the pharmacist to-day is alcohol. It is immaterial whether he is a large manufacturer or a small retailer. He wonders—how he can get along at present; what has the future in store?

Less than a year ago, with the suddenness of a bursting bomb, the prohibitionists won a great victory, and the manufacture of beverage spirits ceased. As alcohol is necessary for manufacturing purposes, regulations were issued by the Internal Revenue Department, under which non-beverage spirits could be obtained. These regulations are undoubtedly not perfect, and it will take years to make them so—if ever. To the pharmacist who was accustomed to buy and sell alcohol (and the vast majority never knowingly sold it for beverage purposes) it seemed an invasion of his rights to say that he has got to give bond, etc., can only sell at retail the medicated articles, regardless of the fact that the physician may not like any of the formulae for rubbing purposes. The physician, in turn, thinks he is abused when he cannot get a small quantity of the pure ethyl alcohol, for a specific purpose, without giving bond.

The manufacturer must be careful that all the private formulae he compounds conform to his sworn statement as regards medication. All of this is decidedly harassing. But these are harassing times and we all must put our shoulders to the wheel and help. Some of you have probably complained because your permit was refused or delayed for some reason; but see the other side—that of the other humans just like yourselves who have been directed by Congress to enforce the law of October 3, 1917.

One application was made by a duly credited physician to the Collector of Internal Revenue for ten gallons of alcohol and ten gallons of whiskey with which to treat his patients, "and please hurry the permit for the whiskey." A sanatorium made application for spirits which was to be used untreated for their patients. Such a place would soon have been doing a large business if the permit had been granted—which it was not. This is something of the other side. If we are to have National Prohibition after the war, and personally, I believe we are, then non-beverage alcohol is with us to stay. The thing for each to do is to try to the best of his ability to obey the spirit of the law and assist the Commissioner of Internal Revenue in the proper carrying out of the law given him to enforce.

Alcohol is necessary to the pharmacist. Sometimes he is able to make something else do fairly well, but that is about all. Tincture of Jamaica Ginger has been

* Read before Scientific Section, A. Ph. A., Chicago meeting, 1918.

¹ Mr. Adams desires it to be understood that any expression in this paper is his personal opinion, and not an official one. This paper was written before the war had ceased, therefore some statements are not applicable to present conditions; there are, however, suggestions embodied which may prove of value.—EDITOR.

² Chief Chemist Internal Revenue Bureau.

used as a beverage, and will be; Lemon Extracts have and will, but because a few perverts out of 10,000 normals satisfy their craving for intoxicants by such means, should we prohibit the manufacture of such preparations? I say *no*, but such preparations should be made *standard* in order to reduce the chance of improper use, and the seller of such preparations should keep his eye on his sales to see that they are not abused. Why you ask?—Because if you, as legitimate users of alcohol, do not want more restrictions put upon you, then keep your use and sale of alcoholic preparations clean. If necessary, be more strict. In compounding a tonic, don't try to see how little medication you can put in, but use sufficient so that criticism will be reduced to the minimum.

It is of course needless to say that as long as a drop of alcohol is sold there will be demands to stop it, but careful supervision on the part of the pharmacist will disarm many such objectors and the real mass of the people will be satisfied.

DENATURED ALCOHOL.

The restrictions placed on non-beverage alcohol have caused many to turn to denatured alcohol. Congress undoubtedly intended that industrial users of alcohol should, wherever possible, receive the benefits of alcohol free of tax. That more users do not apply I believe is due to a misunderstanding.

It is probably questionable as to whether the Commissioner of Internal Revenue would approve the use of denatured alcohol in preparations intended for internal use, although the same might be poisonous, as Tincture of Nux Vomica; the reason for such refusal being as to where to draw the line, but there are undoubtedly many other preparations, such as liniments, cold creams, and similar semi-paste toilet articles for which, if the question were properly presented to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, permission might be granted for the use of denatured alcohol. Of course, in cases such as this, the manufacturer would want to use a specially denatured alcohol, and would be required to give a bond, to store the material in a certain place and follow some few restrictions. As soon as the formality of the bond and the restrictions are understood, it is found that such procedure is not the nightmare that it first appeared to be.

The ideal denaturant has never been discovered, and I believe the present time to be an ideal one for manufacturing pharmacists to get together to see if they could not arrive at some denaturing material which would render the alcohol unpotable and still leave it efficient for such technical uses.

Leaving out of consideration the additional internal revenue tax, alcohol is no higher than other commodities at the present time. Vast quantities of alcohol are used in the Munitions Industry in the production of nitro-cellulose and other war necessities. As soon as the war ceases, the manufacture of such materials will automatically cease. Such alcohol will then be available for the arts and naturally the price will tend to return to normal, unless, of course, the revenue taxes remain. I think alcohol in the future should be more plentiful than it has been in the past six months, because there are unlimited quantities of molasses in Cuba, and, if the "bottoms" are available, it could be easily transported into this country. Therefore, there seems no reason to be worried about the supply. The cost of non-beverage alcohol of course will be high as long as the revenue taxes remain on it. As to the probability of such taxes being removed, you are in just as good position as I am to judge. We all know that the Government is obliged

to raise immense sums of money by taxes, and it is the rule to keep taxes on such products as have been taxed in the past.

For these reasons, I firmly believe, as previously said, that the manufacturing pharmacist should look to denatured alcohol as the solution to one of his problems. Of course, in the preparation of his tinctures, etc., such use will probably not be granted, but there are vast quantities of alcohol used for extractive purposes and for the manufacture of semi-solid articles, which I believe are entitled to the privileges of the tax-free article.

PRONUNCIATION OF PHARMACEUTICAL LATIN.*

BY A. B. STEVENS.

Much confusion exists in the pronunciation of pharmaceutical Latin terms. There appears to be no uniformity among teachers or text-books. Some follow the Roman system, others the English and many in actual practice use a mingling of the two systems. High schools and colleges universally teach the Roman system. Teachers of pharmacy naturally look to text-books on Pharmaceutical Latin for correct pronunciation. But comparison of such text-books shows a marked difference in practice among authors. For instance, Robinson's "Latin Grammar of Medicine and Pharmacy" uses the Roman system. Dr. O. A. Wall in his "Elementary Lessons in Latin" does not state which system he uses, but from the sounds given letters it is evident that he uses the Roman System. The same author in his excellent work on "The Prescription" devotes 72 pages to the use of Latin in medicine and pharmacy, but the only reference he makes to pronunciation is found in the foot-note on page 127 in which he very aptly states:

Incidentally it may be remarked that it is absurd to give scientific nomenclature, derived largely from modern English words, the pronunciation which was supposedly used by Cicero for the Latin he spoke 2000 years ago.

In another text-book, "Pharmaceutical Latin" by Hugh Muldoon, the author gives both the Roman and the English systems, but states that:

Though the latter system is recommended as being the more practical because of its similarity to English, it will be found that many prominent men in the profession use the Roman method, perhaps more generally a mingling of the two. . . . It is much more important for a pharmacist to be able to interpret a prescription correctly than it is to be able to pronounce in a faultless manner the Latin contained therein.

Dr. M. L. Neff, in his book on "Prescription Writing" does not allude to the pronunciation of Latin.

Clothers and Bice in their "Elements of Latin for Students of Medicine and Pharmacy" have the following to say regarding the pronunciation of Latin:

Latin is now pronounced differently in different countries. English-speaking people use either the Roman or the English method, the Roman being the one preferred by scholars generally. In this book the English method will be used as that prevails in medicine and pharmacy.

Other text-books on pharmacy, such as:

"Principles of Pharmacy" by Army, "Treatise on Pharmacy" by Caspari, and "Practice of Pharmacy" by Remington, all devote considerable space to pharmaceutical Latin but do not give anything on pronunciation.

* Read before Section on Education and Legislation, A. Ph. A., Chicago meeting, 1918.