

### TAX-FREE MEDICINAL ALCOHOL DECISION SOON.

*The Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter* states: "It is reported in trade circles that the solicitor of the Internal Revenue Bureau will soon render an opinion on the legality of using specially denatured alcohol in making U. S. P. and other medicinal preparations for internal use. Authorities charged with enforcing the law are understood to be satisfied that such use of denatured alcohol, which would be tax-free, would be within the law.

"There is a question of policy involved, inasmuch as some twenty-odd million dollars revenue are annually derived by the government from tax-paid alcohol used in medicinal preparations for internal use.

"Tax-free alcohol, denatured, has been authorized for some time in medicinal preparations for external use, as well as in perfumes and cosmetics. The trade hopes this use will be extended to internal medicinal preparations, and it is claimed in support of this principle that there would be no immediate total loss of revenue. It is said that manufacturers of internal preparations are not generally ready to proceed to use denatured alcohol, and that the revenue loss might run only a million or two dollars during the first year, perhaps \$5,000,000 the second year, and gradually reach the total.

"The subject was brought up at the National Drug Trade Conference meeting several weeks ago, when a resolution dealing with the matter was offered, but, after some discussion, was withdrawn."

### CHANGES IN NARCOTIC ORDER FORMS.

The *Bulletin* of the N. W. D. A., January 25th, states, that "for the purpose of throwing

additional safeguards about traffic in narcotics, the Prohibition Commissioner has authorized an important change in the order forms. In the future, duplicate forms will be printed in red ink, while the originals will be in black, as heretofore. This change will facilitate distinguishing originals from duplicates and is counted upon to obviate mistakes and irregularities that have caused the Bureau much concern during the past year. In a number of cases, manufacturers and wholesale druggists, apparently in the best of faith, have filled duplicate order forms without detecting the fact that they were not originals.

"The substitution of the new forms for those heretofore in use will be made gradually as stocks are exhausted. There is a considerable supply of old forms in the hands of collectors, and these will be issued to the trade as long as they last. There is no authority in law for retiring these outstanding forms; hence they will be used up.

"The Bureau has had under consideration for some weeks a departure in the preparation of order forms that is designed to protect the Government against fraud but that would cause great additional labor and inconvenience to the drug trade, especially to the jobber. The new plan, which has not been adopted and against which, no doubt, there will be many vigorous protests, contemplates the use of a separate form for each narcotic preparation. This would be no great hardship in the case of the average small retail druggist, but it would multiply many times the labor and expense incident to operating the narcotic department of the average jobbing house."

### BOOK NOTICES AND REVIEWS.

*A Text Book of Pharmacognosy.* By Heber W. Youngken, Ph.M., Ph.D. P. Blakiston's Son & Co., Philadelphia; 538 pages, 350 illustrations. Price, \$6.00.

The first impression that one gets of "Youngken's Pharmacognosy" is that it was written by a teacher who understood how to present the subject to the student mind. There are on the market and used in our colleges of pharmacy several books which are very good as dispensaries but which can hardly be called textbooks. Dispensaries are of much value to the druggist and pharmaceutical manu-

facturer but not to the beginner in pharmacy. Professor Youngken's "Pharmacognosy" is a real textbook and will be gladly welcomed by teachers of pharmacy.

Chapter I, dealing with the fundamentals of pharmacognosy, is valuable, in that it paves the way for what is to come in the other part of the book. This chapter includes discussions on the valuation, the collection, and preservation of drugs and a summary of the history of pharmacognosy.

Chapter II gives a morphological classification of crude vegetable drugs. In this

chapter the author gives very accurate definitions of the botanical terms used in the Pharmacopoeia, the National Formulary, and other related works. Drugs derived from the same part of the plant are discussed as a whole and their similarities and contrasting characteristics brought out. After mastering this second chapter the student will understand fully the Pharmacopoeial descriptions of crude drugs.

Part II, on the "Taxonomic Consideration of Drugs," constitutes by far the largest part of the book. It is in this part that the author shows his skill in properly presenting the subject to the student mind. The discussion of each drug is divided into the following paragraphs:

Synonyms,  
 Botanic origin,  
 Parts used,  
 Habitat,  
 Description of the plant,  
 Production and Commerce,  
 Description of the drug,  
 Histology,  
 Description of the powdered drug,  
 Constituents,  
 Substitutes and Adulterants.

The heading of each paragraph is in bold-face type which enables the student to quickly find what he wants.

In cases of drugs derived from different species and cases of drugs commonly adulterated, the author has arranged very good tables showing the contrasting characteristics by which the different species can be identified. These are quite valuable in pharmacognosy.

The book contains many illustrations, including photographs of both drug plants and crude drugs, and some showing the crude drugs in the original shipping packages. There are many good drawings and quite a few photomicrographs of crude drugs.

The book should appeal not only to students, but also to pharmacognosists in all lines of work.

C. J. ZUFALL.

*Bernard Courtois and the Discovery of Iodine.* The *Chemist and Druggist* of January 7 abstracts interesting data and information from M. L. G. Toraude's new volume on "Bernard Courtois and the Discovery of Iodine." The volume is dedicated to the President of the Academy of Dijon. The article states that "in the early days of this Academy, a local

barrister, Guyton de Morveau, was Professor of Chemistry there. At the same date (1776) a retired valet, Jean Baptiste Courtois, who lived opposite, was engaged by Guyton as laboratory assistant and general factotum. His son Bernard was born in 1777, and a few years later Jean Baptiste became, through Guyton de Morveau's influence, manager of an artificial saltpetre works. Guyton soon after (in 1791) left Dijon for Paris. Bernard grew up at Dijon, and later was apprenticed to M. Frémy, pharmacist at Auxerre. He was drafted into the army as hospital pharmacist in 1799, and subsequently went to the laboratory of Louis Jacques Thénard, with whom he had made friends at the Polytechnic. It was about 1802 when Courtois left Thénard to join Séguin, and began to study opium. He isolated from opium a crystallized body which was probably morphine. On December 24, 1809, Séguin communicated to the Institute Courtois's note on this subject. M. Toraude considers that Courtois committed the same fault with reference to morphine as with regard to iodine. His (secondary) education was but limited; this caused lack of confidence, and timidity made him hesitate. It was while washing seaweed ashes and destroying the sulphuretted compounds by sulphuric acid that Bernard Courtois noted the violet fumes which revealed to him iodine. M. Toraude suggests that he may have used a larger quantity of acid on that particular day. Courtois had not at his saltpetre works the laboratory apparatus necessary to study the subject thoroughly. He asked two Dijon friends—Desormes and Clément—to follow up the matter. Clément put the discovery before the Institute on November 29, 1813, and on December 6 and 20 Gay-Lussac read two notes which M. Toraude reprints *in extenso*. It was Clément who showed samples to Chaptal and Ampère, and to Sir Humphry Davy, when the English scientist came through Paris with a special safe conduct granted by Napoleon. M. Toraude remarks that Davy had suffered from a serious malady of a nervous nature in 1807-8."

#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

*Das Opium.* By Dr. Axel Jermstad, and published by A. Hartleben, Vienna and Leipzig. Volume 368 of the Chémico-Technic Library. The preface is by Prof. Dr. H. Zörnig. This publication was reviewed for the January JOURNAL A. PH. A. by Prof. Otto Raubheimer.