

EDITORIAL NOTES

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RESEARCH ON PHARMACOPŒIAL PROBLEMS.

BY E. FULLERTON COOK, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE OF U. S. P. X.

Under the By-Laws of the Pharmacopœial Convention, the Executive Committee of Revision is "authorized to carry on research work and to make preparations for the ensuing revision." With the "Tenth Revision" completed, the Committee has turned to this next task so definitely assigned by the Convention.

As the first step, all members of the General Committee of Revision were called upon for information concerning difficulties of the revision which, in their opinion, were not yet satisfactorily solved and for other suggestions for needed research within the scope of the Pharmacopœia.

The responses from those who had so arduously worked during the "Tenth Revision" for the perfection of the text revealed many yet unsolved questions, and these were studied and classified by the Executive Committee of Revision in a conference held in New York City. That these selected subjects may be available for further consideration by the members of the Committee of Revision and by the many other research workers in the medical, pharmaceutical and chemical fields, they are herewith published.

For convenience they have been classified under five divisions, each division having the direction of the corresponding members of the Executive Committee of Revision, one member serving as Chairman of the group. The divisions are as follows: (1) Therapeutics and Pharmacology; (2) Chemistry; (3) Botany and Pharmacognosy; (4) Pharmaceutical

Formulas and Processes and (5) Nomenclature, Tables and Miscellaneous Questions.

Additional copies of this list may be obtained by addressing the office of the General Chairman, E. Fullerton Cook, Chairman of the Committee of Revision of the U. S. Pharmacopœia, Tenth Revision, 636 South Franklin Square, Philadelphia, Pa., and any one desiring to undertake the study of one or more of the problems suggested or of assisting in one of the coöperative studies which are outlined is requested to address the Chairman of the group having charge of that particular study or to write to the General Chairman of the Committee of Revision.

It is very important that those undertaking these researches should indicate their intention to the Committee of Revision, that a record may be had of all proposed studies and that such assistance as is available may be extended.

It is understood, of course, that all such voluntary studies may be presented and published wherever and in whatever manner the author may desire, only that the facts may be available for consideration during the next revision.

THE U. S. P. COMMITTEE ON THERAPEUTICS AND PHARMACOLOGIC RESEARCH.

H. C. WOOD, JR., CHAIRMAN, WITH C. W. EDMUNDS, GEORGE W. MCCOY AND TORALD SOLLMANN.

1. **Iron Citrate Solution for Hypodermic Use.** It is desirable to know the composition of commercial iron citrate solution sold for hypodermic use, and then to devise satisfactory standards for the solution.

2. **Stainless Iodine Ointment.** Is "stain-

less" ointment of iodine (as Ung. Iodi Denigrescens N. F.) equivalent to the U. S. P. ointment? The following should be studied:

- a. Determine absorbability of iodine through skin.
- b. Which ointment is best absorbed?
- c. Are the antiseptic qualities of the two ointments identical?

(Iodine Petroxolin, N. F., might also be included in this study.)

3. **Ointment of Belladonna.** Is the U. S. P. X formula suitable for absorption through the skin? Physiological tests should be made on human beings and on animals.

4. **Mercurial Ointments.** It is desirable to study and report on the relative efficiency of mercurial ointments as made with different fatty bases. This study may advantageously be extended to other official ointments.

5. **Cimicifuga.** Is Cimicifuga therapeutically useful? A report is desired covering:

- a. Opinions of clinicians who have used it.
- b. Experimental clinical study.

6. **Gelsemium.** This drug has been dropped from the U. S. P. It has been suggested that it should be restudied for evidence of its therapeutic value.

7. **Lobelia.** A restudy of the therapeutic value of this drug is considered desirable.

8. **Cannabis.** Is this drug worthy of retention in the U. S. P? If so, clinical tests should be conducted to indicate the comparative value of Indian and American Cannabis, and also the rapidity of deterioration in the drug and its preparations.

9. **Bacterial Vaccines.** Which of these are worthy of U. S. P. recognition?

10. **Infusion of Digitalis and Tincture of Digitalis.** A study should be made of the potency of the infusion and tincture of digitalis made by various methods.

11. **Cascara.** The U. S. P. X demands that cascara be aged before use in medicinal preparations. This practice has been generally followed by manufacturers for a long time, but is it based on accurate information? If the literature does not reveal that tests have definitely proved the advantage of aging it would be desirable to investigate the question.

12. **Oil of Santal.** It is desirable that an investigation be made of the chemical and therapeutic properties of the commercial oils of sandalwood.

13. **The Assay of Veratrum Viride.** A

satisfactory bio-assay for veratrum viride should be devised.

14. **The Assay of Ergot.** A study of the U. S. P. X assay methods in comparison with other bio-assay methods for ergot is recommended.

15. **The Assay of Digitalis, Its Preparations and the Digitalis Groups.** The U. S. P. method for standardizing the heart tonics of the digitalis series should be further studied. One problem is the growing difficulty in obtaining frogs in sufficient quantity. Can a colorimetric or chemical method be devised to take the place of the biological method?

16. **Oleoresin of Male Fern.** A study of the biological and also chemical assay of Oleoresin of Male Fern is desirable, with a consideration of introduction into the U. S. P.

17. **Biological Assays.** All bio-assay standards tentatively adopted by the Second International Conference on Biological Standardization should be tried in comparison with those of the U. S. P. X.

18. **Cod-Liver Oil.** The methods for determining the antirachitic value of this and other related oils are important, and U. S. P. workers should cooperate with other investigators in this field.

19. **Strophanthin.** Strophanthin, being a mixture of glucosides, varies in toxicity on frogs when tested by the U. S. P. method for heart tonics. Variations have been reported in strophanthin from Strophanthus Kombe of from 0.00,000,05 Gm. per Gm. frog (equal to ouabain) to 0.00,000,1 Gm. per Gm. frog. Is it desirable to include in the U. S. P. a biological test such as is given for strophanthus, allowing for a certain range? The U. S. P. X recognizes strophanthin from *S. Kombe* only. The question has been asked: Why not from *S. hispidus* also? They should be studied for comparison.

20. **Pituitary Solution.** This solution is sometimes prepared with dilute acetic acid or other acid. This is not recognized by the U. S. P. X. Is acid necessary? If so, suitable limits should be set, but if not required the U. S. P. text should forbid its addition.

21. **Ether and Chloroform.** Are the U. S. P. X standards sufficiently rigid for the requirements of anesthesia? The labeling of manufacturers would imply that such was not the case. As the medicinal use of both ether and chloroform is principally for anesthesia, the U. S. P. specifications should recognize only the highest purity commercially possible.

A commission of authorities should study this question.

22. **Sulphur Ointment.** The use of petrolatum is suggested instead of lard in this ointment. It is claimed to produce a better-appearing and smoother ointment, but will it be equally efficient therapeutically? This will require a clinical study.

23. **Boric Acid Ointment.** Is the U. S. P. X formula superior to that of the U. S. P. IX? A number of clinicians should be invited to use these two ointments and report comparative results.

(To be continued)

PERSONAL AND NEWS ITEMS.

The AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION is indebted to **Dean William B. Day** for the gift of several unbound volumes and quite a number of single copies of the JOURNAL which complete several volumes. Appreciation is expressed for the thoughtfulness which prompted the donation and thanks extended for the gift.

Chairman E. Fullerton Cook, of the Revision Committee of U. S. P. X, has donated a complete set of the Circular Letters, etc., of the recent revision to the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION. The thanks of the ASSOCIATION are tendered the Committee and the Board of Trustees.

E. G. Eberhardt, of Eli Lilly & Company, advises that he has received an historic pill-coating machine, historical documents and other matter for the ASSOCIATION, and promises to add to this collection. The helpfulness of our fellow member is appreciated.

George A. Gorgas, of Harrisburg, member of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION since 1884, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his entry into the drug business, on his own account. The day was marked by congratulations of patrons and of the employees of the four stores of the George A. Gorgas Drug Company.

Pharmacist **F. A. Grazer**, of the Sacramento Hospital, Sacramento, Calif., is convalescing. He has been seriously ill.

Secretary E. L. Newcomb, of the N. W. D. A. and Publicity Director of the Campaign Committee, A. P. H. A. Headquarters Building, was one of the principal speakers at the meeting of the Minnesota Pharmaceutical Association.

A. L. Buzzell, editor of the *Bulletin of Pharmacy* for about a decade, is now the

editor and publisher. It is hoped that the publication will continue to grow in usefulness. **Walter M. Chase**, whose activities at the annual meetings of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION have been very helpful has discontinued his editorial work on the *Bulletin* and assumed a position of responsibility with Parke, Davis & Co. Best wishes are extended to both Mr. Buzzell and Mr. Chase.

TSCHIRCH MEMORIAL VOLUME.

Festschrift für Alexander Tschirch. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 460 pages. Publisher Chr. Herm. Tauchnitz, Leipzig. This volume, in memory of the seventieth anniversary of Dr. A. Tschirch, contains 56 original papers by contributors of note, and the volume is dedicated to him. An account of the festivities on the occasion of the seventieth birthday of Dr. Tschirch will be found in several of the preceding numbers of the JOURNAL. Thirteen countries are represented by the contributors and the subjects concern the work in which Dr. Tschirch has been active and prominent during many years. The preface to the book was prepared and written by Prof. Dr. H. Thoms and a number of the titles of the contributions follow: "The Determination of Santonin in Wormseed" (H. Feckurts); "The Laxative Action of some Sugars" (H. Fühner); "How Are Alkaloids Produced?" (J. Gadamer); "The Sources of the Oldest Herbals" (F. Homel); "Some Non-Alkaloidal Constituents of Ipecacuanha" (O. Keller); "The Importance of Hamburg as a Leading Commercial Center and Harbor with Special Reference to Its Drug Market" (G. Weigel); "A Method for the Quantitative Determination of Essential Oils in Drugs" (J. Stamm); "Greek Liquorice and Its Juice" (E. Emmanuel); "Aspergillus Flavus in Blocked Fresh Lac"; "East Indian Balsam of Tolu and West Indian Balsam of Peru" (L. van Itallie, W. J. van Eerde and A. Harmsma); "The Distillation of Essential Oils with Superheated Steam" (P. van der Wielen and A. H. W. M. Hermans); "The Therapeutic Importance of Drugs" (E. Bürgi); "Studies on Hashish" (P. Casparis); "The Antigen Properties of Lipoids" (G. Sobernheim); "Colorimetric Assays and Standardized Colored Fluids" (H. V. Army, in English). The work contains several tables and illustrations, among the latter a picture of Dr. Tschirch.