

in the percolation process to prevent it, the loss of the Aromatic Spirit cannot be avoided. This loss also increases perceptibly on standing. An assay process for ammonia should be included under the formula.

**Liquor Magnesii Citratis:** Objection to the promiscuous use of sodium bicarbonate in preference to the potassium salt has been raised by several physicians. In the latter case the potassium citrate in the finished preparation is of decided advantage in cases of kidney derangement where a diuretic action is desired, whereas in the case of the sodium salt this action is questionable. The question of economy should have little consideration where therapeutic efficiency is at stake.

It was voted to submit this paper to the Chairman of the U. S. P. Revision Committee.

#### ABSTRACT SECTION ON HISTORICAL PHARMACY, 1929.

"Medical and Pharmaceutical Knowledge of Balzac." by L. E. Warren, Drug Research Unit, Food Drug and Insecticide Administration, Washington, D. C.

Considered from every point of view it is generally conceded by critics that Balzac is the greatest novelist of all time. The writer has been an enthusiastic reader of Balzac for many years and has noted that there are many passages in his writings which show that Balzac had considerable knowledge of medicine and pharmacy as these were understood a hundred years ago. It seemed worth while to bring some of these to the attention of the Historical Section.

During his lifetime Balzac arranged most of his writings under the general title "Comedie Humaine." In the "Human Comedy," Balzac attempted to portray every human emotion in all the varying degrees exhibited by man. Love and hate, altruism and avarice, generosity and greed, magnanimity and anger, hope and despondency, grief, pleasure, pain, approbation and scorn, follow each other like the ever-changing colors in a rotating kaleidoscope. He attempted to paint every type of character, to depict every phase of human activity, to describe every profession, occupation and trade. Princes and paupers, nobles and peasants, politicians and authors, lawyers and priests, notaries and doctors, printers and painters, sages and idiots, lovers and mistresses, angels and cortesans are brought across his pages in an ever-bewildering procession. The Human Comedy is a picture of French Society of a century ago. It is far more than a picture—it is a mirror of human nature.

Unlike Dickens, who never lost an opportunity to ridicule the medical profession, Balzac had a general affection for physicians and some of his doctors are among the finest characters in French literature. References to medicines and their sources and to methods for treating the sick are constantly made throughout the length and breadth of the Human Comedy. Some of the stories are retold and many passages showing Balzac's knowledge of pharmacy and medicine are quoted, abstracted or reviewed.

#### ABSTRACTS OF SCIENTIFIC SECTION, 1929.

"Amino Alcohols. 3. The Potentiation of the Action of Epinephrine by Arylpropanolamines," by James C. Munch and W. H. Hartung.

Some arylpropanolamines homologous with ephedrine have a similar action with ephedrine in potentiating the pressor action of epinephrine in the anesthetized dog.

"Studies of Astringency: A Method of Measuring Astringency," by E. R. Theis.

If well-hydrated tissue is treated with an astringent liquid, a net increase of the system occurs, which can be accurately measured. The astringent action of various chemicals and commercial preparations has been demonstrated and is shown graphically.

"Oregon Drug Plants," by E. T. Stuhr.

Detailed list of drug plants found within the state.

"Gleditschia Triacanthos, Linné, a Preliminary Report on the Chemistry of the Fruit," by Loyd E. Harris.

Oleic, palmitic and stearic acids identified in fixed oil from seed. Glucoside found in seed and in seed pod.