

By way of suggestion, the following would serve as a foundation to work upon:

1st. That no tablet be compressed, or massed into a gelatin capsule that contains more than 1-6 grain of corrosive sublimate (or some other agreed upon maximum amount) unless so made as to denote its potency.

2d. That no tablet be compressed that is colorless, round, ovoid, or oblong in shape, which contains dangerous amounts of corrosive sublimate.

3d. That separate and distinct packages be used for dispensing potent mercuric chloride tablets to the trades and the professions.

4th. That all mercuric tablets for external purposes, containing dangerous amounts of the drug, be colored with some form of soluble dye, one strongly suggestive of danger or poison, such colors as the greens, blues or reds.

5th. That all tablets of this type be oddly formed, marked with the word poison so as to make them easy of identification and differentiation, in the dark as well as the light, and be made large so as not to be easily swallowed.

6th. That these tablets be covered with some suitable covering like colored foil, or encased in gelatin capsules strikingly colored, and bearing the word poison all over its surface.

7th. That they be dispensed in bottles only, preferably odd in shape and of blue glass, with a label attached giving directions as to use and care in handling, printed in red.

8th. That aside from the directions as to use, the label also bear advice as to "first aid measures" that are considered effective, with the appellation—"POISON, For External Use Only—In case of Poisoning Send for a Physician At Once."

9th. That a separate label be affixed to each package on which is boldly printed the following—Not To Be Swallowed. Do Not Remove The Remainder Of These Tablets From This Package. Keep Bottle And Contents Away From All Medicines Used for Internal Purposes.

COFFIN-SHAPE FOR BICHLORIDE TABLETS.*

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When carefully reading and studying this query one is impressed by the suggestive manner in which it has been worded, for the idea I have to offer for your consideration is largely the result of the query's phraseology.

You will observe that it suggests a *new expedient*, which is what you surely will find to be the basis of the suggestion I herewith offer.

The similarity in the weight, shape and general appearance of Corrosive Sublimate Tablets and Alkaline Antiseptic Tablets, and many headache tablets has

*Presented to Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association, June, 1913, in answer to Query No. 7. What new expedient can be devised to prevent poisoning through the mistaking of Corrosive Sublimate tablets for ordinary tablets used in medicine, numerous cases of such nature being reported from time to time?

been the cause for the sad accidents that have been reported from time to time, when the dangerous, poisonous corrosive sublimate tablets have been taken in mistake for tablets intended for internal administration.

It is unfortunate that we cannot educate the populace to the point of following the advice of Davy Crockett—"Be sure you're right, then go ahead," but we must take human nature as we find it exemplified in the majority of our fellowmen (and women) and endeavor to devise ways and means whereby they may be protected against their own negligence and carelessness—for who are in a better position to take such action than those of our profession, who are constantly in contact with these various drugs and their prepared forms for administration or application.

It is a known fact that the Tablets of Corrosive Sublimate are very easily procured, and are used to a very large extent in the home as an antiseptic, hence they are not looked upon as the dangerous agents that they really are in the hands of the careless and ignorant.

An attempt has been made by at least one manufacturing house to overcome the similarity of shape of the Corrosive Sublimate Tablets and all other tablets manufactured by them, and a container similar to the shape of the tablet has been used to designate their brand of these tablets; and the blue and the red colored sorts of these tablets are no stranger to the wide-awake druggist and to physicians.

This latter idea I heartily endorse, as the solutions of this powerful medicinal agent should always be colored—preferably red,—to suggest activity and danger.

When casting about for ideas wherewith to overcome the difficulty that confronts us I endeavored to bear in mind the fact that the best and most appropriate one must be as distinctive and suggestive as possible, so as to impress upon the populace as forcefully as possible the fact that danger surrounds the article in hand.

After a careful examination of various ideas that came to mind I decided that the one I now present for your inspection is the par-excellent one—one that cannot be mistaken for anything now upon the market, and one not likely to be imitated very closely for any purpose.

The shape of this tablet—coffin-like—certainly is distinctive and suggestive and one that can be made even more suggestive by preparing the dies so as to counter-sink the emblem of the *skull* and *crossbones* into the tablet upon one side and the word *poison* upon the reverse side of it.

These emblems and the word could be embossed upon the tablet if deemed more desirable and more effective.

Some such shape should be legislated into existence and the old-fashioned form should be made an illegal one for these tablets—in the interest of the public welfare.

I feel assured that the dangers that beset these valuable, when properly handled and used, tablets can be largely overcome by adopting the idea now before you for your discussion.