

## CORRESPONDENCE

### NOTE ON COLOR AND FORM OF "BICHLORIDE TABLETS."

BY E. FULLERTON COOK, CHAIRMAN.

COMMITTEE OF REVISION OF THE U. S. P.

"A few days ago a personal friend of mine in Swarthmore made the tragic error of taking several Bichloride Tablets in mistake for Aspirin. Several weeks before he had been told by his physician to go to the drug store and buy some Bichloride Tablets for use in a wash for a foot inflammation from which he was suffering. He had done this in December and the record shows the purchase of these and its proper registration in the store as for a wash.

"Unfortunately neither the drug store management nor the manufacturer of the tablets seems to have known of the requirements of the Pharmacopœia for these dangerous tablets. Many will doubtless remember, some years ago, of 'almost an epidemic' of similar accidents and nation-wide publicity concerning them. At that time the Pharmacopœia established specifications for these tablets which were intended to prevent their accidental misuse and it was believed that every manufacturer was fully conforming to the spirit of these requirements. However, the tablets sold and accidentally taken, in this case, were *white* and *discoïd* and while the word POISON was stamped on the tablet in raised letters it could have been easily overlooked, especially as Aspirin tablets also carry a raised lettering.

"I am taking the liberty of sending this letter to manufacturers in this country and to the pharmaceutical press with the appeal to every one selling Bichloride Tablets of the Antiseptic type, *no matter whether they do or do not conform exactly in strength or formula to the tablet now official in the Pharmacopœia*, that they immediately check the essential safety factors and see that in these respects they do conform to the specifications of the U. S. P. which have been in force for the last sixteen years.

"In accordance with the Pharmacopœia, a Poison Tablet of Corrosive Mercuric Chloride (Corrosive Sublimate Tablets or Bichloride Tablets) should be of an angular shape, *not discoïd*, each having the word POISON and the skull and cross bone design distinctly stamped upon it. Each tablet weighs about 1 Gm. and contains not less than 0.45 Gm. and not more than 0.55 Gm. of corrosive mercuric chloride ( $\text{HgCl}_2$ ), the remainder consisting chiefly of either sodium chloride ( $\text{NHCl}$ ) or ammonium chloride ( $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$ ). *The tablets are to be colored blue*, preferably with sodium indigotindisulphonate. Poison Tablets of Corrosive Mercuric Chloride are to be dispensed in securely stoppered glass containers on the exterior of which is placed a red label bearing the word POISON and a statement indicating that the Tablets contain the required amount of corrosive mercuric chloride.

"This warning applies to *manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers* over the entire United States and all distributors should immediately check their stock and withdraw from sale every package which offers a white or discoïd tablet."<sup>1</sup>

### PHARMACY IN THE 1933 WORLD'S FAIR.

Chairman H. C. Christensen, of the Pharmacy Committee of the World's Fair, prepared a most interesting report dealing with the 1933 World's Fair. The pharmacy exhibit will depict the educational, scientific and professional progress of pharmacy during the past century; the exhibit will be located in the Hall of Science. The fair officials have allotted a definite space to pharmacy in the Hall of Science, a very choice spot, and the size is about the same as that for the American Medical Association and the American Dental Association for their exhibits, approximately 1500 square feet. There is no charge for this space but pharmacists are obligated to portray in the exhibits the progress of pharmacy during the past century from a non-competitive and professional viewpoint. (Outside of the general display zones there will be competitive displays.) It is evident that pharmacy has been fairly dealt with and the space gives a splendid opportunity for showing the progress of pharmacy, so that the visitors may realize what pharmacy has ac-

<sup>1</sup> I have just learned that death resulted from the Bichloride poisoning referred to. The patient died at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital on Sunday night, February 7th.—E. F. C.

completed. Every pharmacist should lend his efforts and give publicity to make this a worth while exhibit.

Chairman Christensen describes the buildings as far as they have been developed or completed and this shows a definite purpose to go ahead with this great world's fair. He explained an exhibit as an example—by the electrical connection the circulation of the blood is shown, the action of the heart, etc. There will be no "hands off" sign on these exhibits. In that respect it follows the idea of the museum so eminently well organized by Dr. Miller in Germany.

There is no question relative to the exposition—it will be opened on time; at least one hundred contracts have been signed and the opening date has been named as June first, 1933. Thirty-nine out of forty-eight states have appropriated money or appointed official commissions to formulate plans, and quite a number of official acceptances have been received from foreign countries. The completed buildings so far are: The Administration Building, the Travel and Transport Building and the replica of Old Fort Dearborn; and others under construction are The Hall of Science in which the pharmacy exhibit will be housed and the three buildings of the electrical group.

The financial success of the Fair is assured and the undertaking has nothing whatever to do with other conditions that may obtain in Chicago. The unique use of line and color, combined with brilliant illumination at night will create a veritable wonderland. Just as the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 set a new style in American architecture so the 1933 Exposition will create a new school.

The site of the Exposition is along the Lake front and adjoining the Field Museum, the Adler Planetarium, and the Shedd Aquarium. No more ideal spot can be found for the exposition than at this site. The problem of pharmacy is to find a way of financing the exhibit; a number of the national organizations have pledged contributions. Inasmuch as the display will represent all phases of pharmacy a Committee will, in the near future, provide opportunity for all to participate by lending their support and giving their suggestions. Everyone affiliated with pharmacy should use his efforts to make this display representative of pharmacy's accomplishments so that the attention of the world may be attracted to the service of pharmacy.

#### IOWA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, DES MOINES, IOWA.

*To the Druggists of Iowa:*

During the Forty-Fourth General Assembly, Section 2306 of the Code of Iowa was revised to read as follows:

*"Druggists to keep record of remedies sold.* Every pharmacist or person who sells any proprietary drug, preparation or article of any kind used for the cure or treatment of any general disease, except on physician's order or prescription, shall keep a record of the name, address and sex of each purchaser. A copy of said record shall be mailed each week to the State Department of Health, or to the full-time county or municipal health officer, if such exists within the county."

This Section became a law on July 4, 1931.

It becomes the duty of the State Department of Health to interest itself in the enforcement of this law. According to the above, druggists are required to report the names and addresses of persons to the State Department of Health, who purchase drugs or appliances for the treatment of venereal diseases.

We recommend that the druggist *exercise his judgment* and record only those cases he believes purchased supplies for the treatment of such diseases. All such cases *must be reported*.

This letter is being written with the knowledge and approval of the State Pharmacy examiners, in order that all druggists in the state may be informed regarding this law and its revision.

We are forwarding herewith blank forms to be used for transmitting the information, as approved by the statute. Your coöperation in this matter is respectfully solicited.

(Signed)

D. E. CAMP, M.D., *Deputy Commissioner*  
In charge of V. D. Control.