

The Polish pharmacist can only prepare and dispense medicines according to the written prescription of the physician, who alone has the right to visit the sick, diagnose the case and prescribe the medicine. A few milder medicines can be sold by the druggist without a prescription.

The pharmacists of Switzerland sell only drugs and compound prescriptions. They do not diagnose or prescribe except in minor ailments. Physicians are not allowed to dispense their drugs unless they are a certain distance from a pharmacist, except in one or two districts which have their own laws on the subject.

From the foregoing comparisons and contrasts it seems to me the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Women have a definite place in the pharmaceutical profession abroad.
2. The number of women in Pharmacy in some foreign countries averages considerably higher than in the United States.
3. Training for pharmacists abroad is more rigid in many instances than here, and longer apprenticeship is required.
4. It appears that incomes from Pharmacy in these countries are more stable, possibly due in part to the concession system.
5. Experience in some of these countries demonstrates that the public can be educated to make purchases at hours other than at night, or on Sunday or to pay an extra fee for this service.
6. The impression given me by my correspondents indicates that these countries look upon Pharmacy as a serious and exalted service. The emphasis upon the professional side far outweighs the mercantile aspects. One correspondent called my attention to the fact that the term "drug business" is not known but the term "drug service" is used.

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### AQUEOUS ELIXIR—PROPOSED CHANGE IN FORMULA.\*

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In presenting one of the annual exhibits of the National Formulary at the Convention of the American Medical Association, one of the writers was quite surprised to find that a freshly prepared aqueous elixir had turned from a colorless solution to one with a faint pinkish tinge, from the time it had been shipped to the time the material was opened for display, a matter of only a few days. Upon returning home a check was made upon a sample prepared some time previously, and it was discovered that this also had changed color, having a decidedly reddish cast.

Recognizing the nature of the vanillin which is contained in the preparation, it was surmised that this might be the troublesome factor. In this respect it was recalled that the delightful Compound Elixir of Vanillin of the N. F. was also subject to some darkening upon aging, probably due to the same general cause. A

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few experiments soon indicated that the item in question was none less than the vanillin, since only the elimination of the vanillin produced a stable product, the color changing in a short period of time.

A series of experiments was performed using various antioxidants together with a control, only to find that the usual change did not occur even in the control. Then it was discovered that a lot of vanillin from an entirely different source had been used and since screw-cap bottles had been employed in place of the cork stoppers previously used, a series of elixirs was prepared using the original type of vanillin, screw cap and cork stoppered bottles and various antioxidants. Within ten days to two weeks time color changes were noted in all except those in which sodium formaldehyde sulfoxylate had been used. The latter are still colorless at this writing, after a period of more than five months.

Believing that there might be a difference in the various vanillins which are available, possibly due to differences in purity or origin, whether made from clove or guaiacol, authentic samples of both varieties were obtained from manufacturers. These, together with several other available lots, were used to prepare the elixir in question. After aging for three weeks there is no perceptible change in any of the preparations, and time alone will tell whether or not material differences will develop. If differences are noted it will then be necessary to determine the true causative factor.

Vanillin of course acts like a phenolic body and would readily give color reactions with various impurities. It seems to be recognized generally that a trace of iron will cause its solution to change color; light is believed to affect it and there is the possibility of certain impurities not being removed during the manufacturing process, although it is conceded to be quite thoroughly purified on the whole.

Regardless of the final outcome as to what is causing the specific color change, and whether or not it will be of such a nature as to be corrected readily, it would seem desirable that the formula for Aqueous Elixir be changed to provide a colored vehicle rather than the water-white colorless preparation now official. As a vehicle to improve the appearance as well as the taste of medicines, a colorless product offers little. How much more pleasing and attractive to the average individual does a bright-colored prescription appear! It looks appetizing to begin with, and that in itself is a most valuable asset.

Therefore it is suggested that to the present Aqueous Elixir formula be added 5 cc. of the official solution of amaranth for each 1000 cc. of elixir. The elixir then becomes bright red in color, beautifully clear and sparkling if well prepared, considerably more attractive as a general vehicle for prescription usage, and the natural red color would be sufficient to successfully mask the possible color change previously mentioned.

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The Fourth Annual Bronx Better Health Week convened at Fordham University, College of Pharmacy, New York City, on May 3rd and 4th. The program was devoted exclusively to the control of Diabetes and its complications.

The Medical Association of Alabama held its annual session in Montgomery on April 18th to 20th. Dr. A. R. Bliss, Jr., presented a paper on, "A Plea for the Use of Pharmacopœia and National Formulary Drugs."