

Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing

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SOME DISPENSING HINTS.

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The following dispensing hints are submitted with a realization of the fact that they may not be new to all of our members, but believing that at least some one may be thankful for one of these suggestions, they are offered for what merit they may possess.

Excipient for Nitrate of Silver Pills.—When dispensing nitrate of silver in pill form, whether prescribed alone or in combination with other medicinal agents, we had used for years, as an excipient, a petroleum residuum, sold by one of the large manufacturing houses; but as the product obtainable of late was not satisfactory, we experimented with various combinations of unctuous substances and decided that the mass resulting from a combination of one part hard paraffin and five parts petrolatum gave the best results.

If the amount of the medicinal agents prescribed is small, it is advisable to add thereto a sufficient amount of powdered althea to make the finished pill about the size of a one (1) grain quinine pill.

No unpleasant odor attaches to this excipient, as is associated with resin cerate; and our medical friends report very satisfactory results from the administration of pills made in this manner.

Charcoal for Children.—Every practical pharmacist well knows the difficulty that attends the administration of charcoal, in powder form, to children (and to many adults); and as we are supposed to serve as pharmaceutical advisers to the medical men, will suggest that your medical friends be made acquainted with the possibility of administering charcoal in powder form by using the crushed charcoal tablets. These can readily be triturated with other medicinal agents and administered without the need of using syrup, honey or some similar heavy fluid, with their drawbacks, owing to the possibilities of fermentation of the sugars contained therein. Very satisfactory results have been obtained in the cases where this method has been used.

Difficulty Experienced with Methyl Salicylate.—We recently had annoying experiences with a lot of methyl salicylate, when dispensed in combination with liniment of camphor and iodine. We had repeatedly dispensed this combination without any complaint being registered by the physician writing the prescription, but after replenishing our supply of methyl salicylate, we encountered objections from the prescriber, as the mixture would become decolorized in a short period of time, indicating absence of free iodine. A series of experiments proved that

it was not due to the liniment of camphor; hence we suggested the substitution of oil of betula for the methyl salicylate and our troubles were at any end. If you wish to use methyl salicylate in combination with iodine would suggest that it be tested first for its iodine absorption value, so as to avoid possible subsequent controversies and explanations.

Home-made Dusting Boxes.—Occasionally we are called upon to dispense small quantities of medicinal agents in a sifting-top box, and as it is desired to concentrate the siftings upon a small space upon the body, we have found it expedient to manufacture the sifting-top boxes extemporaneously by punching the necessary holes in a round utility box with an awl of small size, holding against the under side of the lid a section of a broom handle sawed off at right angles. By placing the label upon the box so as to cover the junction point of the top and of the body of the box (a shouldered one only should be used) there is no danger of the lid being shaken off, with its unpleasant results.

ONE CAUSE OF INSTABILITY IN COMPOUND SYRUP OF THE PHOSPHATES, N. F.

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When the method of procedure of the National Formulary is rigidly followed in the preparation of this syrup, the product will after a short time become cloudy, finally throwing down a precipitate—the time required varying with the order in which the ingredients are added in making the initial solution of calcium carbonate.

By referring to the N. F. formula it will be observed:

First. That the amount of glycerin employed is very great compared with the aqueous solvent.

Second. In the preparation of the initial solution containing the calcium carbonate, glycerin is the first in the order named, followed by the addition of a comparatively small amount of orange flower water.

If the glycerin is first added to the calcium carbonate, citric acid, potassium bicarbonate, sodium bicarbonate, etc., solution is extremely slow, the mass in the meantime swelling up to an enormous volume, carbon dioxide being expelled very slowly, and owing to the viscosity of the liquid a large percentage of the gas is held in suspension.

If, on the other hand, the orange flower water be first added to the calcium carbonate, citric acid, etc., solution is effected very rapidly, a large portion of the carbon dioxide being expelled at once.

In either case, however, whether we add the glycerin or the orange flower water first, the result will finally be the same, there will be a precipitation of the calcium salt.

Third. By further inspection of the formula, we note that the amount of hot water (8 fluidounces) directed for the solution of the ferric phosphate and ammonium phosphate, is very largely in excess of the amount necessary to dissolve these two very soluble salts. Three fluidounces of hot water would be