

## EDITORIAL NOTES

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### ERRATA IN ALCOHOLOMETRICAL TABLES OF U. S. P. IX.

Dr. A. B. Lyons sends in the following corrections that should be made in Table for Temperature Corrections on pages 636 and 637 in the earlier printings of the ninth revision of the U. S. Pharmacopœia: on page 636, column headed 6 percent, line 9, for 1.10 read 1.20; 10 percent column, line 16, for 2.85 read 2.95; line 16, 28 percent column, for 5.70 read 5.80; column headed 30 percent, line 6, for 2.28 read 2.18. On page 637, column headed 67 percent, line 11, for 3.33 read 3.58, and 86 percent column, line 13, for 3.51 read 3.57.

### CORRECTIONS TO BE MADE IN AR- TICLE ON "CHANGED ALKALOIDAL STANDARDS IN U. S. P. IX."

The following corrections should be made in article, Changed Alkaloidal Standards in United States Pharmacopœia IX, pp. 1118 to 1120, October issue of the JOURNAL.

On page 1119, in paragraph marked (A) and second line, "Column II" should read "Column I of the table. Example,—to adjust," etc.

In last paragraph, p. 1119, first line, "tincture" should read "fluidextract of belladonna root."

"Column II" in third line of p. 1120, should be "Column I."

### EX-PRESIDENT W. C. ALPERS IMPROVING.

Members of the American Pharmaceutical Association will regret to learn that Ex-President W. C. Alpers recently had to undergo a surgical operation. Information has come to the office of the JOURNAL that the patient is improving and is now at his home. It may require several weeks before com-

plete recovery and Dr. and Mrs. Alpers have the sympathy of members and friends, who join in best wishes for Dr. Alpers' speedy restoration to perfect health.

### POISONS BY PARCEL POST.

It is reported that Postmaster-General Burleson is working on an amendment of the postal laws which will permit the shipment of poisonous drugs, including narcotics, through the mails as parcel post.

This question has been before the department a long time and physicians, druggists and dentists have urged the advantage in permitting them to obtain direct from manufacturers drugs of this class. Such provision has been advocated by various associations and more particularly by the National Association of Manufacturers of Medicinal Products, who prepared and had introduced in Congress a bill permitting the mailing of poisons under reasonable restrictions.

It is desired by the Postoffice Department in framing this amendment to the postal law to so guard it that such drugs will not fall into the hands of unprofessional people or those who will use them in any way that would be a violation of the law, so that the utmost care will be exercised in this respect.

### AMENDMENTS TO THE HARRISON LAW ARE CONTEMPLATED.

It is reported that in the forthcoming annual report of the Secretary of the Treasury will be further recommendation for legislation amending the Harrison Narcotic Act to meet objections raised by the recent decision of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Just what form this recommendation will take has not yet been determined, but there have been several conferences between officials of the Treasury Department and of the Department of Justice in order to determine what should be done.

### SALE OF DRUGS FOR VENEREAL DISEASES PROHIBITED IN AUSTRALIA.

Clause 5, of a bill relating to the sale of drugs for venereal diseases in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, reads:

"No person other than a medical practitioner or a person acting under the direct instructions of a medical practitioner, shall attend upon or prescribe for or supply any drug to any person suffering from any venereal disease for the purpose of curing, alleviating or treating such disease." Penalty, up to £50, or to imprisonment with or without hard labor for a term of not more than six months.

A sub-clause stated that the section should not apply "to a registered pharmaceutical chemist who dispenses to the patient of a medical practitioner the prescription of such practitioner."

In Western Australia and Queensland somewhat similar legislation is in force, but provides for the right of the pharmacist to sell any drug or proprietary medicine, if he does not tender any advice.

Such legislation may be contemplated in this country, and this is the reason for calling attention to the Australian legislation, so that the subject may be studied.

### BUREAU OF CHEMISTRY TO ASK INVESTIGATION OF DRUG WAREHOUSES AND FACTORIES.

With the assigned purpose of assuring the quality of American crude and manufactured drugs that are exported, the Bureau of Chemistry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, is planning to ask Congress for authority to enter and examine drug factories and storage houses for drugs.

It is stated that charges have been made in some quarters, that drugs manufactured in this country and exported have been adulterated, and that such practices might seriously injure American export drug trade. It is admitted that adulteration abroad would not be prevented, but assurance could be given, if the request of the Bureau is granted and the means supplied for such inspection, that the drugs are up to standard when exported from this country. Under present working conditions such inspection is impossible, and the only means of investigation is by purchase in the open market, whereby the quality of drugs for exportation is not always indicated.

### PREVENTION OF ADULTERATION.

The members of the National Wholesale Druggists' Association are deeply concerned, for their own protection as well as their patrons', in guarding against purchase of adulterated and sub-standard drugs. The following resolutions were adopted by that organization at the Baltimore meeting:

*Resolved*, That the Association instruct the chairman of the incoming Committee on the Prevention of Adulteration to take such action as may seem to him desirable to urge upon the United States Department of Agriculture that they give prompt publicity to such standards and tests as they may establish and discover, together with an exact description of the methods employed, so that the members of this Association may be guarded against the purchase of drugs that may be below standard or adulterated in preference to the present custom of keeping those standards and tests for the use of the department only.

Inasmuch as Section 11 of the Food and Drugs Act is in direct opposition to the constitutional rights of the citizens of the United States, since by its provisions an official of the United States Government has the absolute power of deciding a case involving considerable sums of money without an appeal to the courts:

*Be It Resolved*, That the incoming Chairman of the Committee on Legislation be instructed to take such action as he may deem desirable to have the law amended so that an appeal to the courts shall be allowed.

Inasmuch as the present methods of inspection and action at the various ports of entry are leading to serious inequalities in the administration of the Food and Drugs Act:

*Be It Resolved*, That the incoming Chairman of the Committee on the Prevention of Adulteration be instructed to take such action as may seem to him desirable, perhaps in conjunction with the National Drug Trade Conference, in order that there may be greater uniformity in action at the various ports of entry, and so that he may urge upon the United States Department of Agriculture that the action taken in any case may become a matter of public record, and be used by both officials and importers as a guide to govern them in future transactions, as it is now the case in the appraiser's department.

And that a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to the Secretary of Agriculture for his consideration.

## NEW SOURCES OF POTASH.

Experts of the Bureau of Mines demonstrated some months ago that potash in paying quantities can be extracted by electrical devices from the fumes of Portland cement plants, and according to the *Scientific American* numerous cement establishments in all parts of the country are installing the necessary machinery to save this hitherto wasted by-product. There was some question as to whether the cement industry would furnish enough potash for home consumption even if all plants installed the fume-precipitating devices; but recently the Bureau of Mines has found that in another of our dominant industries—steel and iron making—tons of priceless potash are being sent skyward in fumes from blast furnaces. Experiments in the electrical recovery of this potash are being made by one pioneer steel concern and are being watched with interest by the Government metallurgists. If this newest possible source for the fertilizer ingredients so sorely needed by American agriculture proves as valuable as early experiments indicate that it may, it is probable that more than enough by-product potash for home consumption can be produced in this country from the two great metallurgical industries, lowering at the same time the cost of iron, steel and cement.

## IMMERSION FOR MICROSCOPIC OBJECT-GLASSES.

Edward M. Nelson, writing in the *English Mechanic*, states that microscopists should know that it is now almost impossible to procure proper immersion oil for microscope object-glasses. Continuing, Mr. Nelson says "that the proper fluid was invented by Prof. Abbe, and has been sold only by the firms of Winkel and Zeiss. The 'cedar oil' as commonly sold, and also the immersion fluid of Leitz, have not the requisite optical properties, therefore objectives immersed with them do not yield their best results. Prof. Abbe experimented with a large number of substances, and devised several immersion fluids. The following is the formula of the one he adopted. He has now been dead some years, and I do not know if any alteration has since been made in this fluid except in its price, for the amount one now gets for 1s. is about one-third of what could be

purchased formerly. This is Abbe's formula: The ingredients are three, viz.: 1. White oily *tacamaque* of Guibourt. 2. Oil of cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). 3. Castor oil. The proportions are: 29 grammes of *tacamaque* dissolved in 22 cubic centimeters of cedar oil, to which is added 14 cubic centimeters of castor oil."

## A NEW VEGETABLE DYE.

According to *Commerce Reports* Vijao is the local name of a plant that natives of Porto Rico use as a source of dye. It is claimed that an ink of exceptional fastness is made from the seeds of this plant, which has been identified botanically as *Renealmia exaltata*, of the *Zingiberaceæ*.

Vijao is as yet but little known in most parts of the West Indies. In general appearance and manner of growth the plant is not unlike that of cultivated ginger, the chief difference lying in the arrangement of the flowers. In the case of vijao these are arranged in a panicle, while those of the ginger plant are more or less in the form of a cone-shaped spike.

It appears from various well-authenticated reports that this plant and some very closely related forms are distributed over a very extensive territory. Vijao grows on a number of the West Indian Islands and is found also in the Guianas and in Brazil. The Brazilians call this plant "papatinga," which has relation to its tinctorial properties. In some parts of Brazil it is popularly known as pacova, and the seeds, which are called "fructos de pacova," are said to be collected for the purpose of making a bright red dye of common local use.

While the principal value of this plant is for its seeds in making dye, it is worthy of notice also because of its use as an article of food and as a drug. Vijao is an herb with a creeping rhizome or underground rootstock similar to that of the ginger plant, and in some parts of the West Indies these rhizomes are collected from the wild plants and used for the same purposes as the true ginger. Both the seeds and rhizomes are employed medicinally as an aromatic tonic. The seeds serve also as an anthelmintic. The leaves are used locally as a cure for a number of ordinary ailments.