

EDITORIAL NOTES

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INTERNATIONAL PHARMACOPOEIAL NOMENCLATURE.

The progress of international Pharmacopoeial nomenclature was stopped by the world war; whether we are now in position to take up the subject may be questioned; however, in the revision of the U. S. Pharmacopoeia this is a very important matter, if for no other reason than that interests in all countries of the world, in one way or another, have enlarged; even former enemy countries depend to some extent on us for supplies that include medicines.

This editorial note is prompted by an editorial in a recent issue of the *Journal of the A. M. A.*, which stated that the editor of the *Nederlandsch Tijdschrift* had been appealing to the profession of Holland to "purify" the language, and use Dutch terms instead of the foreign terms with which medical writings are now larded. Trenchant comment on the editor's reactionary views is a news item in the same issue relating to an unfortunate error which resulted in poisoning and nearly cost a Belgian pharmacist his life. During the occupation of Namur (Belgium) a German physician prescribed "Hydrargyrum chloratum 50 cg., 10 stück" (Calomel tablets). The Belgian pharmacist assumed that "Hydrargurum chloratum (Belgian term for corrosive mercuric chloride) was intended and dispensed mercuric chloride tablets—following the regulations of the country—in an octagonal bottle, labeled "For external use—Poison," and also *Sublime corrosif*. The physician assumed calomel had been dispensed, and, with all the precautionary measures, poisoning resulted. The pharmacist was accused of trying to poison the Germans, and was saved only by the Belgian chief inspector of pharmacies, Dulieré. The latter appeals for uniformity in the nomenclature of official drugs in all lands, and urges the appointment of an international Pharmacopoeia Commission for the purpose.

The latter has been done. The late Prof. Joseph P. Remington was a member of the Commission, and Prof. Dr. A. Tschirch,

of Berne, Switzerland, is the Chairman or President. Prof. Otto Raubenheimer is Chairman of the A. Ph. A. Committee on International Pharmacopoeial Nomenclature. Not only should there be greater uniformity in the titles of official drugs but of those in more or less general use, the work was under way but was interfered with by the War.

ORGANIZING AMERICAN PHARMACY.

Prof. E. L. Newcomb has outlined a comprehensive plan for organizing American Pharmacy. A number of the features provided for the national scheme have been practically and successfully applied in a restricted way. This means that there is a possibility of perfecting such or similar organization, provided a reasonable percentage of the drug trade is sufficiently interested to form the nucleus and enough will energetically cooperate; above all, leaders are needed. The plan has been presented to the executive committee of the American Pharmaceutical Association and the National Association of Retail Druggists; the Chicago, New York and Philadelphia Branches A. Ph. A., and the Minnesota Pharmaceutical Association.

POISONOUS NATURE OF AUTOMOBILE EXHAUST GASES.

G. A. Burrell and A. W. Gauger, in a technical note issued by the United States Bureau of Mines, attention is directed to the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning when motor engines are allowed to run in a small confined space, such as an average garage. This danger is more serious than is recognized by most amateur motorists, and is insidious in its nature, since the symptoms develop almost without warning; and collapse in a garage will rapidly prove fatal unless outside aid arrives quickly. It was found that when a 4-cylinder 30 h. p. engine was run for twenty to thirty minutes in a closed garage dangerous amounts of carbon monoxide were present in every part of the building. Near the machine the air was extremely unsafe after the engine had run for fifteen minutes. Enough carbon monoxide was produced to be dangerous, regardless

of the position of the spark and throttle. It is quite unsafe to run an automobile engine in a small garage unless doors and windows are open. This fact should be made widely known. There have been a number of fatal accidents from this cause.—From *Chem. Abstr. Amer. Chem. Soc.*, 1919, 13, 2720.

DO CALORIES MEASURE THE VALUE OF FOOD?

This question is asked by Dr. Henry Dwight Chapin, whose conclusions are presented in the *Scientific Monthly* for March; these are that heat measurement alone is not a safe guide for the calculation of food values. Foods that build rather than those that readily undergo oxidation must be properly gaged if we are to have healthy development. Some form of biologic testing of foods must be elaborated if an always reliable gage of nutrition is to be established.

EFFECTS OF SACCHARIN.

The "Correspondence Column" of the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Pharmacist* (March 6, 1920), states that one of the latest pronouncements on the effects of saccharin is that it is harmless and at the same time worthless as a provider of energy. It has been shown that sugar, when ingested with other foods, stimulates the secretion of catalase, and, hence, increases the process of oxidation in the body. It is now found that the saccharin has a much greater action in this direction than sugar. In this respect and from this viewpoint saccharin is a helpful adjunct to the dietary.

BULLETIN ON MANUFACTURE OF ORGANIC CHEMICALS.

A bulletin recently issued by the University of Illinois gives methods for the manufacture of thirty-two organic chemicals, especially in lots of one-half to five pounds. The methods have been studied for the past two years at the University of Illinois, but they are only new in a few instances; in general, they are methods heretofore described, but the details given are helpful to one who has a reasonable amount of experience in organic chemistry. Explanation of the conditions to be observed in manufacture is given, and an endeavor has also been made to use procedures adaptable to large scale production, for example, the avoiding of extractions wherever possible; the substitution of a cheap solvent for a more expensive

one; or the introduction of mechanical agitation, an extremely important factor in the success of many commercial processes. With each preparation a complete bibliography of the known synthetic methods is given, and wherever more than one method has been studied in the laboratory the results of each have been included.

With the results of these studies as a guide, advanced students, as well as manufacturers, should experience no difficulty in preparing these organic chemicals which, previous to the recent war, were almost entirely of German origin. The University announces that a second bulletin containing the directions for thirty or more compounds is in the process of preparation.

VALUE OF HEMOGLOBIN DETERMINATION BY VARIOUS METHODS.

A recent issue of the *Journal of the A. M. A.* reports on the comparisons made by Robscheit on the various methods used for estimating hemoglobin percentages. The Sahli hemoglobin method when using the color tubes accompanying the instrument, gives very inaccurate results because of the decided variance in color density of the standard tubes, the result of fading. The Palmer method offers a very satisfactory means of hemoglobin determinations if the standard solutions are freshly prepared. Newcomer's method obviates many difficulties heretofore observed with other procedures, and gives good results with the glass 0.96 mm. in thickness, although the color is quite pale. A method is presented applying Palmer's procedure to Sahli's principle, which has proved most satisfactory. It removes the difficulty encountered with Palmer's method, the lack of stability of color in the standard solutions. It has the advantage of an easier color match than that of red tint. The standards prepared have remained sufficiently unchanged for a period of eleven months to insure accurate hemoglobin determinations during this long period.

FASHION IN THERAPY.

The *Pharmaceutical Journal and Pharmacist* for March 6 is drawn upon for the following abstract from an editorial in the *London Lancet* on Fashion in Therapy: "The medical profession is no more immune than any other section of the population from the influence of fashion, and this is to be expected, for medicine is not an exact science, while every trial

along unexplored paths may lead to fortunate issue. When a therapeutic measure is employed for a series of years, and then is dropped suddenly, the explanation is that at last, and by common consent, it is recognized that that particular path is leading nowhere." Leeches are still to be found in a good many pharmacies (or were before the war). Referring to the change of fashion undergone in this instance, the *Lancet* says that in 1832 21,000 leeches were used in St. George's Hospital, and at St. Bartholomew's 97,300. How many are employed to-day? "But there remain wise physicians who employ this simple and effective method of controlling inflammation." It is truthfully remarked by the writer that "the popularity of drugs with the members of the medical profession also varies greatly; it is due to the blind following of fashion that the use of drugs fell into disrepute, whence the efforts of learned pharmacologists, like the late Thomas Fraser, have begun to rescue them. Sarsaparilla, especially in the form of the compound decoction, at one time had an enormous reputation. No small number of surgeons considered that it was as valuable in the treatment of syphilis as mercury itself. Sarsaparilla is now more appreciated by the customers of the herbatist than by anyone else. Yet the drug cannot be utterly without therapeutic value, even if it was formerly rated too high. Being quite unable to live up to its entire claims, it has lost credit completely, and its neglect may be an error. Arsenic, one of our most valuable pharmaceutical weapons, has been affected strangely by the passage of time, for while its real uses escaped knowledge, its possible uses were grossly exaggerated by repetitious laudation. In the latter half of the eighteenth century it was in great repute for the treatment of malaria. Early in the nineteenth century it began to be used widely for the treatment of skin diseases, and the idea has been firmly implanted in the public mind that there are two infallible drugs for the treatment of affections of the skin—sulphur externally and arsenic internally. A reaction has long since set in, and the use of arsenic by dermatologists has diminished. But there remain, perhaps, as many who, having had great experience in this department of practice, value the drug highly and maintain that it is of excellent result if properly given. While the medicinal preparations of arsenic are thus losing hold, the organic arsenic compounds are becoming our routine weapon against syphilis."

PERCOLATION.

A. Goris (*Bull. des Sciences Pharm.*, 26, 465) briefly reviews the history of percolation and then proceeds to consider the forces at work during the first stages of percolation, *viz.*, weight and density of the menstruum, capillarity, diffusion, osmosis, and viscosity, the conclusion arrived at being that there must exist an optimum rate of flow. The principal advantage of percolation is the increased yield of tincture of extract, but it must also be borne in mind that in percolation a liquid containing substances in solution may have, and often has, a solvent power with regard to other substances that the pure liquid does not possess; thus, with rhubarb the presence in the menstruum of gallic acid, cinnamic acid, and gluco-gallin enables the menstruum to dissolve rheopurgarin; with bitter orange-peel the presence of aurantiamarin enables the menstruum to dissolve hesperidin and isohesperidin. A further advantage is that the active constituents are rapidly withdrawn from the action of enzymes. Bridel has shown that tincture of gentian (made from a root containing gentiopicrin) made by maceration is devoid of gentiopicrin, which is destroyed by the enzyme, whereas when made by percolation the gentiopicrin is retained. The state of subdivision of the drug is not without influence; it might appear that the finer the powder the better the exhaustion would be, but experiment has shown that with cinchona bark a coarse powder gives the best result, with ipecacuanha a medium, and with stramonium a fine. The powders should be dried, at least so far that the amount of moisture does not exceed 2 to 5 percent. Moistening the drug, sifting, and preliminary maceration are regarded as necessary. The form of percolator to be preferred is that recommended at the International Conference at Brussels, although, according to the author, theoretically a special percolator should be used for each fineness of powder (but his reasoning is not easy to follow). Many experiments are required before any definite rate of flow can be fixed, and in such experiments regard should be had to the fineness of the powder, the nature of the drug and of the menstruum.—From *Pharm. Jour. and Pharm.*

GOVERNMENT NEEDS CHEMISTS, PHYSICISTS, ETC.

The United States Civil Service Commission announces that the Government service is in

need of a large number of chemists of various kinds. During this period of readjustment, technical men are especially needed. Besides chemists it is stated that there are openings for physicists, ceramic assistants, laboratory assistants and aids; metallurgical, technical, and electrical laboratorians, etc.

Further information and application blanks may be obtained from the secretary of the U. S. civil service board at Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Paul, St. Louis, New Orleans, Seattle, or San Francisco, or from the U. S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.

JAPANESE MENTHOL AND PEPPER-MINT OIL MARKET DIFFICULT TO ANALYZE.

Commercial Attache James F. Abbott, Tokyo, Japan, states that the menthol situation is extremely difficult to analyze, because people are disinclined to give any information they have, being fearful of supplying any to a competitor. While there is an active market in Japan for menthol, the peppermint oil market is inactive, and it is, therefore, the policy of dealers to quote the two together, offering a case of each for about \$25, whereas if sold separately the menthol would be quoted at about \$20.50 and the peppermint oil at about \$6.50. According to the estimate of a Japanese exporter, there are only about 27,000 pounds of menthol in the market.

A GLYCERINE SUBSTITUTE.

The *Scientific American* says that according to a German patent soluble magnesia salts of butyric acid can be considered satisfactory substitutes for glycerine, especially when in combination with a small amount of alcohol or glycerine. The butyrate is very viscous neutral and has a low freezing point. It is non-corrosive, forms a clear solution in water, and mixes satisfactorily with glycerine and its substitutes.

MANUFACTURERS WILL PRODUCE THEIR OWN SUGAR.

About a year ago the advisability of manufacturers producing their own sugar was briefly discussed. It is, therefore, interesting that St. Louis capitalists have formulated plans for the organization of a \$3,000,000 corporation which will grow sugar cane and refine sugar in Louisiana. They have chartered the South Atlantic Sugar Co. Plans include building a \$1,000,000 refinery. Land for

cane-growing has been secured, including several thousand acres within ten miles of New Orleans, the idea being to plant sugar cane this year, build the refinery and have it completed in time to handle the crop next autumn.

About 90,000 tons of sugar will be grown during the first season. The property purchased has fourteen miles of canals to float barges carrying cane to the mill and to bring cane from other plantations.

PERSONAL AND NEWS ITEMS

John Uri Lloyd, of Cincinnati, Ohio, an ex-president of the American Pharmaceutical Association and for fifty years a member of it, has been nominated to receive the Joseph P. Remington Honor Medal. The presentation will be made at the New York Branch meeting of the A. Ph. A., April 19, which is also the seventy-first birthday of the recipient.

William J. Schieffelin has been elected president of the New York Drug and Chemical Club and Romaine Pierson, vice-president.

Dr. John Macfarlane, professor of botany of the University of Pennsylvania, has resigned; his resignation to take effect with the close of the term. There were twenty-eight students in botany when Dr. Macfarlane came to the University in 1892, now there are 400; the botanical library has grown from a few volumes to six thousand.

Dr. Philip Asher, of New Orleans, has been contributing interesting papers on the U. S. Pharmacopoeia and the Industries to the pharmaceutical press.

Wilson Collinson, responsible for "Up in Mabel's Room" and "The Girl in the Limousine," two of A. H. Woods' successes, was formerly a drug clerk in Columbus, Ohio, at \$18.00 per week, 'tis said, and now has an average weekly income from his royalties of \$3,000.

C. F. Nixon, established at Leominster, Mass., about forty years ago, has incorporated his drug business and associated with him Howard G. Sanford and R. W. Gardner.

H. T. Eberle, druggist at Watertown, Wis., since 1867, has retired from business.

Henry Watters, A. Ph. A., member of Ottawa, Canada, was recently elected president of the Retail Merchants' Association of Eastern Ontario.

Terrance H. Erickson has been chosen assistant professor of chemistry and instructor in botany and pharmacognosy of the North

Pacific College, while Dr. Charles P. Shewey has been added to the school of pharmacy faculty. Dr. Shewey was formerly a member of the faculty of the Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.

Miers Busch, A. Ph. A. member of Philadelphia, was elected recently by the Philadelphia Board of Trade as a member of the Board of Trustees created by the will of the late Thomas Skelton Harrison to administer a fund of about \$400,000, which was devised for the improvement of the social and the development of the commercial conditions in Philadelphia.

E. E. Stanford, pharmacognosist of Cleveland College of Pharmacy, formerly of the Bureau of Chemistry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, has been spending some time in Washington coöperating with the U. S. Tariff Commission in the preparation of data relating to botanical drugs.

S. L. Hilton, Local Secretary A. Ph. A., who recently had a severe attack of influenza, spent a week or ten days in Atlantic City recuperating for his strenuous duties during the convention week. He has returned to Washington very much improved in health.

Dr. Edward Martin, Pennsylvania Commissioner of Health, has prepared a prospectus for public instruction in health matters. The lessons are to be published in the daily press and the answers follow, thus giving a course of instruction which should prove very valuable. This "state health school" will tell of what has happened by neglecting hygienic measures and how to prevent diseases for which neglect is largely responsible. The lessons are to be published during the second and fourth week of each month; districts for promoting this work are being organized, prizes are to be awarded, and an interest is being awakened by publicity.

A. G. Du Mez, Secretary Scientific Section, A. Ph. A., met with the Philadelphia Narcotic Committee, March 29, in the home of former U. S. District Attorney Francis Fisher Kane. The purpose of the meeting was to consider

methods of treatment for drug addicts who voluntarily seek a cure or who are committed to treatment after arrest and trial by federal authorities. Dr. Du Mez said: "If there were sufficient hospitals to which addicts might be sent, the federal authorities would act with more assurance that they could, without danger to the addicts, firmly take the drug habit away from them. More addicts would voluntarily submit themselves for treatment; the addict needs care and attention over a period of time." Hospital arrangements are contemplated in coöperation with the provisions of the France bill.

Dr. F. B. Kilmer says that a National Department of Health is on its way, and it is predicted that such a department will control the practice of medicine and the practice of pharmacy. That it will probably assume jurisdiction over medical colleges, schools of pharmacy, hospitals, dispensaries and the prescription counter; it may even regulate the sale of all patent substances used in medicine and surgery.

Wilhelm Bodemann says that the great trouble with druggists is, while they talk organization from sunrise to sunset, they pay no attention to organization whereas and resolutions; they are united on nothing—talk about maintaining full prices and cut like maniacs—talk about ethics and standards—and—act below zero.

Paul Hayden, "The Man at the Desk," *New York Commercial*, says of team work: "A six team load, each horse with a free rein pulling with about the same amount of effort and in whatever direction desired, makes but *slow* progress. The same team, thoroughly in hand, but with a wild driver who insists on climbing the fence into the side lots makes *no* progress. To be engineered by three drivers with separate opinions as to the preferableness of the left and right sides of the road, to say nothing of the middle, is also damaging to progress.

"When it comes to a choice between mistaken or stubborn drivers we are almost of the opinion that matters should be left to the horses."

OBITUARY.

Mrs. Louise R. England, widow of the late Robert England, of Philadelphia, and mother of Joseph W. England, Secretary of the Council A. Ph. A., died March 31, aged eighty-six years. About a year ago Mrs. England was stricken with apoplexy, from which she did

not fully recover, and this was a contributing cause of her death.

Heartfelt sympathy is expressed on behalf of the members of the American Pharmaceutical Association for Secretary England and his family in their loss.