

of using the two preparations indiscriminately, should take a note of. This is evident from the following considerations:—The British tincture contains 875 grains of iron in two imperial pints, or 18.440 wine minims; which is equivalent to 22.77 grains of iron in a wine ounce. In the United States formula, 1440 grains of iron are ordered to 11 troy ounces of hydrochloric acid, sp. gr. 1.160; but this amount of acid is only capable of dissolving 1304 grains. The tincture contains this quantity to 4 wine pints, or 30.720 minims; equalling 20.37 grains to the fluid ounce. The British tincture has, therefore, 2.4 grains of iron in each wine ounce more than the U. S. preparation; in other words, 9 parts of the former are nearly equal to 10 of the latter.

The keeping qualities of the tincture have given rise to considerable discussion, but if the directions of either of the pharmacopœias alluded to be carried out by an experienced hand, little objection can be made in regard to this particular. Carefully corked samples may be preserved, without deposit, any reasonable length of time; and though it may be undoubtedly true that certain ethereal bodies are formed at the expense of the acid, the process is one of long duration, and the stock of free acid sufficient to last for a long period. The safest plan to ensure a satisfactory tincture, when the character of the solution of iron is not known, is undoubtedly to mix it with the spirit in such quantities as may be required for immediate use.

The peculiar ethereal odor common to a tincture containing free muriatic or nitric acid, is, by some persons, supposed to be an evidence of superior preparation. In a discussion on this subject at the last Pharmaceutical Conference, held at Brighton, Professor Markoe, of Boston,* said that American pharmacists took especial care not to dispense the tincture until it had acquired this odor; and it appears that some British physicians hold the same opinion relating to this matter. It is quite possible that a minute quantity of ether, whether of chlorinated or nitrous origin, might have a slight therapeutic effect. What this peculiar body is we are not informed; nor is there any statement of the quantity which should be present in the tincture. Until these details are satisfactorily adjusted we can only speak of this odor as the evidence of decomposition, and rank it accordingly.

* Proceedings in Phar. Jour. and Trans., No. 117, p. 234.