

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

1. *Vinegar and Imitation Vinegar.*—The Standard Chemical Iron and Lumber Company of Canada, Limited, has recently published a pamphlet bearing the title, "What is the Truth about Vinegar." Among other statements made therein is the following:—"Acetar, the Modern Vinegar, is *pure* diluted acetic acid, not *impure* acetic acid, the use of which is sanctioned by the Dominion Government's standard for Vinegar."

The legal definition of Vinegar, under the Adulteration Act, is as follows:—"Vinegar is a more or less coloured liquid, consisting essentially of *impure*, dilute acetic acid, obtained by the oxidation of wine, beer, cider, or other alcoholic liquid."

The word "*impure*" occurring in this definition, has the same meaning that it has when used of any definite chemical substance, along with which traces of another substance is present. Thus Scotch Whiskey may be described as *impure*, dilute alcohol. Pure dilute alcohol would not be Scotch Whiskey, and would have none of the flavour which causes Scotch Whiskey to be so highly prized. Such a use of the word does not imply the presence of anything of an objectionable nature, either as being unwholesome, or as being disgusting. The acetic acid in Vinegar is *impure* because of the manner of its formation or production; and this is made clear in the definition. When acetic acid is produced by the oxidation of wine, beer, cider or other alcoholic liquid, other substances are produced at the same time—so-called *congeners*—and it is to the presence of these congeners that the article owes its pleasant flavour; in other words, the product would not be *vinegar* at all were they not present. And for this reason, acetar and similar articles, are not Vinegars, but surrogates, artificial vinegars, or imitation vinegars; and unless flavouring material has been added to the acetic acid, which is their chief component, they are scarcely worthy to be called imitations.

There are, no doubt, many consumers of vinegar who are indifferent to its flavour and who value it merely because of its sourness. For such persons, and for any uses of vinegar in which the acidity of the article is alone considered, diluted acetic acid, may be regarded as perfectly satisfactory. But such an article is not vinegar.

The pamphlet, which compels this comment, undoubtedly insinuates a meaning for the word *impure*, altogether different from that which it is intended to bear in the legal definition of vinegar quoted above. So far from the so-called *impurities* of acetic acid implied in the definition, being objectionable or harmful, it is to these so-called impurities that the article is vinegar at all. The acetic acid of vinegar is *impure*, by virtue of the presence of co-generated matters which give its special value to the vinegar. Note, that while the acetic acid, regarded as such, is *impure*, the vinegar itself is not *impure*.

It is perhaps regrettable that the word *impure*, which carries one meaning in technical usage and another in popular usage, should have been employed in defining vinegar. It is this double meaning which has made it possible to play upon the word after the fashion illustrated by the pamphlet above named. There is, however, so evident a lack of ingenuousness and honesty in such performance as should prevent any intelligent and responsible firm from adopting it for advertising purposes. If not direct, it amounts at least to indirect misrepresentation of fact.