

Pharmaceutical Department.

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In view of recent poisoning cases in this city and in country parishes, it would be as well if druggists, and physicians who preside over drug stores, would make themselves conversant with the poison clauses in the Pharmacy Act. From what we can learn, cyanide of potassium, paris green, and other poisons contained in the schedule, are frequently sold without being registered in the "Poison-Book," and sometimes without the purchaser being known to the seller (or even introduced by some one who is known to the seller). These little precautions are a great protection to the druggist, and it would be well to be able to assert that all the requirements of the law have been filled when an accident does occur.

The date of the examinations of the Pharmaceutical Association of the Province has not yet been fixed, but we believe they will take place in Montreal some time in April, and in Quebec some time towards the end of June. Due notice, however, will appear in our next number.

THE CINCHONA BARK COLLECTORS OF SOUTH AMERICA.

BY HENRY R. GRAY.

(Continued.)

Instead of following the cinchona bark to its ultimate destination, we will for a time remain with the Cascarillero.

Like our own lumberman, he is not engaged at his task in the forest during the whole year. This is forbidden by the change of the seasons. It is in the month of May, the autumn of the South American clime, that he can best collect the bark; and in this gorgeous month, the month of Mary as the pious Cascarillero calls it, he repairs to the humid slopes, where grow the cinchonas. He loses no time, for he knows full well he must get away again before the wet season begins, else he may never return to his wife and children, left in a drier, more open and healthier region. In addition to the risk of deadly fevers, even in most favorable seasons, he must be ever watchful for the lurking Jaguar and the poisonous fangs of many a venomous serpent. He is at times also beset by hunger, and cases have been reported of the poor Cascarillero starving in the middle of his task. If he is an energetic man, working independently of a wealthy employer, he has perhaps kept a few mules feeding around his

hut during his bark-lumbering operations: should his mules have managed to escape the much dreaded Jaguar, or the still more to be dreaded termites, or white ants, which invade the body of an animal in millions, and from which there is no escape but by taking to the water, he proceeds to load them carefully with the bundles of bark, which he has carried from different parts of the surrounding forest on his own shoulders, and (then, with an humble prayer for protection, he starts on his long and perilous journey, homeward bound.

If the Cascarillero be a Bolivian he has probably collected his bark in the forest of Yuracares, or in those of the Yungas. In the former case he directs his steps to the town of Cochabamba, in the latter case to the city of Lapaz. At both places he is obliged to dispose of his loads to a company authorized by Government. At each of these towns or bark ports is established a "bank," with officials appointed by Government, whose duty it is to pay the Cascarillero for his crop. He must take a fixed price, according to the quality of the article. If it be best bark from the trunk of the tree, termed technically "tabla," he is allowed about sixty *South American* dollars per quintal of 112 lbs. For the bark of the larger branches, called "charqui," about thirty-five dollars, and for the strippings of the smaller branches and twigs about twenty dollars per quintal. Refusing this price he cannot dispose of his bark in Bolivia. The banking and shipping company pays to the Government a duty, at least such was the case only a very few years ago, of thirty-five dollars per quintal for "tabla," eighteen for "charqui" and so on in proportion for "canelo," and this system holds good for the other bark producing republics of South America, with the exception of Peru. The actual price paid varies each year, according to amount of bark expected and the wants of the Government. Sometimes the Cascarillero manages to escape the double impost of company and Government, by smuggling his bark across the frontier into Peru, where the contraband dealers can afford to give him a better price, afterwards passing it out along with their own through the ports of the Peruvian Republic.

Cinchona-bark, like all other bulky commodities requiring transportation, varies in price according to the place where it is offered for sale. At the stump of the tree from which it has been stripped (for from very old trees it is sometimes though rarely stripped without felling), the Cascarillero would only be too happy to sell it at very less than its market value, and that well dried and ready for the "bank." Two quintals freshly stripped from the logs yield one quintal properly dried, and a clever collector can strip this quantity in one day.

When it reaches the Pacific seaport of Arica, to which the bark from Cochabamba and Lapaz is usually sent, it again receives Government inspection to see that it has gone through the usual channels, and is then shipped and carried around Cape Horn to London or New York, there to be mostly manufactured into quinine.