

Dr. Stiebel offers some danger by the possible presence of arsenic in the zinc powder, which might give rise to arsenical hydrogen, the author advises operating in the open air or in a laboratory having a good draught.—*Paris Photographie*.

Bromide Solutions.

Plain solutions of bromides are very often recommended for the purposes of suddenly arresting development, keeping back certain portions of the image by local application, and for stopping any continuing action of the developer.

After having frequently used them for these purposes we are inclined to think, first, it is necessary to be cautious in adopting these special measures, and, secondly, that there is another use to which these solutions may be put. We have not made any systematic experiments with regard to the action of these solutions, but have noticed when making an occasional use of them that they are very liable to affect the image in a way that is sometimes detrimental and occasionally advantageous.

They are no doubt effective in retarding any future action of the developer, but they must certainly have a reducing effect upon the image that is already out, or we should rather say they convert it into silver bromide, which afterwards dissolves in the fixing solution. A weak solution of a bromide applied to a partially developed negative reduces to a certain extent the density that has been already obtained, and a stronger solution not only reduces the density, but *destroys the finer detail*. It is therefore very advisable to use weak solutions only on such images.

If applied after development is complete, but before fixation, the same effects can be observed in a greater or lesser degree, according to the strength of the solution, and having noticed this we have, with a fair amount of success, attempted to reduce over-developed, or to clear fogged, negatives by soaking them in a solution of a bromide before fixing. The details are at this stage much stronger than they are when incompletely developed; and are therefore less likely to be seriously damaged, though they are affected by a very strong solution.

Some systematic experiments with solutions of the different bromides, varying in strength, made upon images produced by various developers, might possibly lead to useful results. It will probably be found that the effect upon an amidol-developed image is much greater than that produced upon one developed by pyro, but this is only a conjecture. If fog can be reduced to a minimum by *prolonged soaking in a very dilute solution* without damage to the detail, a great deal will be gained. We have frequently cleared off surface fog in a similar manner, but as we generally did it in more or less of a hurry, and used a strong solution, some of the detail went too. It is hardly safe to attempt anything in this way until deve-

lopment is complete, as the bromide appears to destroy the undeveloped latent image very readily, so that unless we are dealing with a bad case of over-exposure the remedy produces worse results than the disease.

As a rule we should advise that a plain solution of bromide should not be applied to a correctly or slightly under-exposed image, under any circumstances, excepting for the purpose of reducing over-development.

The action of the bromide upon the image is shown by the gradual formation of a white deposit; to what extent the action will go on we do not know, neither can we tell why it only takes place before fixation and not after.—*Photo. Notes*

Pharmacy Abroad.

ITALIAN PHARMACEUTICAL CONFERENCE.—Mr. Pietro Farini, of the Farmacia Semprevia, Ferrara, has issued a circular to Italian pharmacists, proposing that a national pharmaceutical congress should be held in Ferrara, the objects being the reunion of pharmacists, the discussion of scientific topics and of the various laws and regulations which affect the practice of pharmacy in Italy.

A PHARMACY BILL IN NATAL.—The Natal Parliament has before it a Bill drafted by the Pharmaceutical Society of that colony providing for the due qualification of medical men and pharmacists, organizing a medical council and a pharmacy board, restricting the sales of poisons to registered persons, and prescribing certain precautions when such substances are sold. Several members objected strongly to the monopoly which the Bill seemed to create, and the Prime Minister admitted there was much force in the arguments of those who opposed the Bill. It was intimated that poisons used by farmers, and sheep-dips especially, should be exempted from the Bill, and, on the understanding that in this and in certain other respects it should be amended, the Bill was read a second time.—*Chemist and Druggist*.

A NEW RUSSIAN PHARMACY LAW.—A new pharmacy law is about to be enacted in Russia. The chemists of that country do not like it at all; but then it is, with them, mainly a case of "Do as you are told, and don't argue." The two principal innovations are the proposed limitation of pharmacy licenses in proportion to the number of population and of prescriptions dispensed in a given area, and the right to be conferred upon district councils, national institutions, and benevolent societies approved by government, of establishing chemists' shops of their own, open to the public. It is even intended to enact that such bodies or societies shall be given the preference over private applicants in cases where there is competition for the license. The Russian pharmaceutical societies are doing what they

can to oppose the projected reforms. They have drawn the attention of the Medical Council to the objectionable character of the competition to which it is intended to expose them. With regard to the limitation of the number of shops, they suggest that the following standard should be established. In large cities one pharmacy for every 20,000 inhabitants or 20,000 prescriptions; in towns of from 5,000 to 30,000 population one pharmacy for every 7,000 inhabitants or 6,000 prescriptions; and in smaller places one pharmacy for every 5,000 inhabitants or 4,000 prescriptions.

DEARTH OF FOREIGN MEDICINES IN CHINA.—Acting-Consul Brady, in his report on the trade of Ichang, China, last year, makes the following remarks, by which English dealers in drugs ought to profit: Foreign medicines and worm tablets figure in the import table to the value of 15,774 taels (£2,500), but, unfortunately, no details are given. Foreign drugs are much appreciated by natives, especially quinine, which seems to be universally known, but there are few places in the interior where they can be purchased. Local chemists in Hong-Kong and Shanghai have their agents, it is true, in some of the larger cities, but the quantities they dispense, I am told, are too large for the requirements of the ordinary native, to whom a disbursement of 40 cash (say 1d.) is often considerable. I consider a large business might be done by any enterprising wholesale firm who would make up medicines in an attractive form, small quantities, with full and concise directions in Chinese on the wrapper. Worm tablets are exposed for sale on the street stalls of almost all the cities in the eighteen provinces, besides being hawked about the country by pedlars, and why should not other medicines be made as popular? Quinine is an article for which travellers are continually being besieged by Chinese, who consider it a panacea for all ills, and the demand for it would soon increase if it were placed on the market in a cheap form, say 1d or 1½d. the dose, either with or without the necessary salts, for the relief of malarial fever. There are many other simple remedies which suggest themselves, such as sulphur ointment, for itch, which is virtually unknown amongst the Chinese for this complaint; boracic acid, for ophthalmia, by the use of which half the cases of impaired sight might be avoided; santonine, for intestinal complaints; iodine, for ringworm; zinc ointment, for sores; and a good purgative pill, as well as an anti-diarrhoea medicine, all of which are amongst the cheapest of drugs in the British Pharmacopœia. Once fairly placed on the market, I am convinced a ready demand would spring up for these articles, and the relief they would afford to thousands would be incalculable, besides bringing in no small profits to the enterprising foreigner who first succeeded in establishing a reputation for them. The essential conditions of success, however, are that the medi-