

PHARMACY.

digitoxin, which he considered identical; his formula for digitalin is now $C_{35}H_{56}O_{14}$. Keller considered digitoxin the most potent constituent of the drug and the chief ingredient in digitalin, he also published a method for its determination in the leaves. Fromme followed with an examination of commercial digitalis, showing the amount of crude and pure digitoxin contained in leaves of different months. Indian henbane has been shown by Dunstan and Henry to yield pure hyoscyamine to the extent of 0.1 per cent. and unaccompanied with atropine. Indian podophyllum has been examined by the same authors, who found the same constituents as exist in American rhizome. Mackenzie has examined the various constituents and found some of them more active than the corresponding resins from ordinary podophyllum. Millard found that manufacturers were introducing podophyllin resin, made from Indian instead of American podophyllum, and calling it B.P. He also gave a test to distinguish the two resins due to the insolubility of the Indian resin in proof spirit with a small quantity of alkali. Cowan examined commercial samples of kamala and confirmed the adulteration to which this article is subjected; the ash varied from forty-one to fifty-three per cent. He also found slippery-elm bark powder containing common flour. Sayre has studied official rhubarb and compared its microscopical appearance and micro-chemical reactions with common rhubarb and canaigre root. Kraemer described wild ginger (*asarum Canadense*). Naylor confirmed Boehm's statement as to the presence of cascariline in cascarilla bark, an alkaloid resembling choline. Cooley described the essential differences between the bark of *Juglans cinerea* and *J. nigra* and gave methods of distinguishing the powders. Bosisto drew attention to an Australian drug, *daviesia latifolia*, which is used as a remedy for low fevers, hydatids, etc., and Paul and Cownley found a glucoside in the drug.

The importance of microscopical examination of drugs is daily being recognized. Day read a paper on the subject which should be most useful to students as the method of preparing the specimen, clearing the tissue and general technique were fully described. It may be added that good works on this subject are not numerous, but Gérard's "Traité Pratique de Micrographie" and Strashburger's "Practical Botany" are most useful.

Full reference has already been made to the new B.P. and to many of the comments on the pharmacy of that volume. There has been published also a "Farmacopea Venezolana," which is the first Venezuelan pharmacopœia. It is Spanish with Latin synonyms, and partakes of the nature of a treatise on chemistry and pharmacy as well as drugs. It is up to date and has none of the conservatism noticeable in older established pharmacopœias. For instance, it includes ethyl chloride, maté, ingluvin, kava-kava, apiol, aristol, thalline, exalgine, guarana, etc. A novel list at the end comprises first those proprietary preparations approved by the medical corporation, whose medicinal composition is known, and a second list, which has not been submitted for approval, but which are in common use. The two English-speaking parliaments of pharmacy, the American Pharmaceutical Association and British Pharmaceutical Conference, met in Baltimore and Belfast respectively; the new president of the A.P.A. being Chas. E. Dohme, of Baltimore, and of the B.P.C., J. C. C. Payne, of Belfast. The proceedings of the American body are of greater interest as practical every-day subjects, such as the extreme cutting by departmental stores, are considered by the commercial section. The nearest approach to this at Belfast was a perfunctory and inconclusive debate on the unsatisfactory features that surround the revision and publication of the British Pharmacopœia. An interesting question has arisen as to the liability of the magnesia in Gregory powder to absorb moisture and CO₂ from the air, as the result of a prosecution in England of a chemist for the presence of carbonate in the powder. As the result of several communications there can be little doubt that little or no absorption takes place when stored in a closed bottle only opened at intervals. The presence of a notable percentage of magnesia carbonate can be more easily traced to the cheaper nature of this chemical. The effect of heat in altering the specific gravity of oil of theobroma has been noted by White and Braithwaite, so that a 15 grain suppository may vary $\frac{1}{2}$ grain according to the time allowed for its removal from the mould.

Percolation under pressure has been the subject of several communications, and is obviously of much value with drugs that tend to clog the percolator. Angosti recommended creosote in pills, to be

made up with liquorice powder and water. Kieselguhr or diatomite has been lauded by Moss as invaluable for tooth powders, as a dusting powder and filtering medicine. Arny concluded that there was very little difference in medicated waters made by different methods, such as percolating through cotton wool impregnated with the oil, or diluting the oil with calcium phosphate or using hot water. Chamberlin has discovered bacillus subtilis in a solution of citric acid used for rapidly producing liquor potass. citratis. He recommended sterilization as a remedy. Pencils of yellow oxide of mercury are recommended by Babcock for ophthalmic use, containing twenty grains to the half ounce of oil of theobroma. Shoemaker has suggested an ingenious method of benzoinating lard by means of an ethereal tincture of benzoin, which is evaporated with castor oil so that the oil has all the odor of benzoin. The addition of a little white wax is necessary when adding this odorous oil to lard to compensate for the liquid. Squibb has returned to the subject of extraction of drugs by means of acetic acid instead of alcohol, and is evidently convinced in its favor. But no statement as to the keeping properties of a fluid extract so made is vouchsafed. Cowley and Catford, on the other hand, show that acetic acid has no advantage over weak spirit for the extraction of colchicum seeds. Hahn recommended acetone as a solvent for the extraction of jalap, podophyllum and scammony. He does not explain that it is better and cheaper than duty-free alcohol, which is the crucial point. The pharmacy of cantharides has been elaborately worked out by Greenish and Wilson, and new formulæ suggested for all preparations. The plasters of belladonna of commerce are not all they should be, and pharmacists should be careful to buy only those of reputable makers, who will give a written guarantee that they answer the requirements of the B.P. Julliard pointed out the incompatibility of fluid extract of hamamelis with that of hydrastis. A thick gelatinous mass separates after a short time. The stability of calomel, even in the presence of chlorides, acids and albuminoids has been reaffirmed by Jovanne. Methylene blue is not a nice article to make into pills, or to handle at all. The suggestion to use crystals and rub with glucose and roll in charcoal obviates most of the trouble. McWalter has described the pharmacy of the pancreas and also of the organoids—a name for pepsin and other animal prod-