

Notes from England.

(From our own Correspondent.)

We are constantly seeing suggestions in the drug journals that manufacturers of proprietary preparations should meet the druggists by supplying \$20 worth of their articles at their lowest rates. This is a method which is stated to have been adopted by Pears for their soaps for several years and the result has been very satisfactory. Many druggists make it a rule never to stock new preparations until they are absolutely obliged by their customers. This plan, if generally adopted, would place all tradesmen on the level with stores, etc., but it is impossible to expect that it will be universally approved. This attempt to do business direct with the manufacturer fails because the manufacturer naturally prefers one or two large accounts with the patent medicine houses to several hundred small accounts all over the country. The only way in which it could be accomplished is by the co-operation of druggists themselves. Thus if all the druggists in a town were to put their orders together they could frequently buy on the same terms as the best wholesale firms. In one part of London I know of four neighboring druggists who have done this for years, not only with patents or proprietaries, but with drugs. The saving effected in the year has been very considerable. They make out their list of wants for a month, unite them together, and submit them to one or two leading firms, and the lowest quotation is accepted. The result is naturally mutually satisfactory.

Some idea of the method by which the "cutting" drug stores manage to flourish has been revealed by a correspondent to a newspaper. Attracted by an advertisement of cheap drugs, he proceeded to the store and noticed a large poster which stated that Epsom Salts were only 2 cents per lb. Not requiring a dose for cattle, he asked for a small packet and was informed the price was the same. Not satisfied with this, the assistant strongly urged him not to take "such nauseous, griping stuff as Epsom Salts, but to try their Cascara syrup," which, it was added, was identical with Siegel's Syrup. The result was that he paid 24 cents for the imitation syrup when he could have procured the genuine article at the same shop for 20 cents.

According to a decision of some local justices, a pharmacist who is engaged as teacher of pharmacy, or as laboratory manager to a wholesale firm, or manager of a hospital dispensary, is not engaged in the practice of pharmacy. It arose in this way. The chemist to Messrs. Burroughs, Wellcome & Co., who appears to be a pharmaceutical chemist, found his name on the register of those liable to jury service. Now, according to the Jurists' Act, pharmaceutical chemists "in actual practice" are exempt from service. He therefore applied for release, but was met with the above expression of opinion.

Curiously enough, the Secretary of the Pharmaceutical Society also went out of his way to assure this gentleman that, in his opinion, he was not practising pharmacy. This was rather rough upon him, as at least he might have expected that the Society should support him in his contention. It certainly seems ludicrous that hair-splitting should take place upon such a subject, but this is very close to it. A doctor is not deprived of his right of claiming exemption because he prefers a hospital appointment to a consulting practice. The conundrum, when is a pharmaceutical chemist not a pharmacist? will have to be answered, when he is engaged in any of the higher branches of his calling.

The annual exhibition of the brewing and allied industries is always of interest to pharmacists, as the goods shown are of very varied use and description. I have just returned from a careful inspection of the present exhibition just concluding at the Agricultural Hall. Quite apart from beer and barrels, there is much interesting machinery and appliances to be seen, whilst the mineral water industry each year occupies more space and greater prominence. It is because of the mineral water makers being present, I suppose, that some of the manufacturing chemists, who make soluble and fruit essences a specialty, are also exhibiting. Amongst the latter are Messrs. Bush & Co., Stevenson & Howell, Martin Perles, of Messina, and many others. All of these have bright displays of essential oils and soluble essences. Disinfectants are also represented by sanitas and its junior rival, izal. Why disinfectants should claim to appear in a brewers' exhibition, it is difficult to say. Probably the Extract of Meat people, like Armour, Brand, Mason, Booril, etc., claim that their preparations are the hot drinks of the winter season. In the machinery portion I noticed Gardner's mixing and sieving machines, which are extremely handy for pharmacists who have a large trade in powders, required to be mixed. They claim that 1 oz. of turmeric added to 56 lbs. of flour and passed through their machine will emerge in a few minutes a uniform pale yellow tint. The automatic weighing machine is also very useful where packets of goods like Epsom salts, granular effervescent preparations, &c., require to be put up in large numbers at a time. Bottle washing machines are also innumerable, and one of special utility, inasmuch as it really washes and not rinses the bottles, was exhibited by T. Hills, of Anlaby Road, Hull. This consists of a wheel which rapidly rotates the brush under water, the bottle being held by the hand. As the bottle is pressed forward the brush cleanses all the inside perfectly.

In connection with essence of lemons, the attempt to sell it by a chemical standard of about 8 per cent. of citral, is openly derided by the leading houses. It appears that this arbitrary standard was fixed by a couple of enterprising analytical chemists, whose business methods of

writing analytical puffs I have drawn attention to before. They are very anxious to assist the trade by supplying analytical reports of a favorable character—for a consideration. In connection with essence of lemons, without any practical knowledge of the industry and merely upon the examination of specimens supplied to them, they suggested this standard, which no one of leading importance recognizes. Whilst the application of chemical tests for adulterations is of immense importance, the nose and mouth remain the principal reliable reagents for determining the quality of essence of lemons when adulteration has been proven to be absent. After all, the matter is simple enough, as although adulteration undoubtedly takes place with the cheaper produce of disreputable houses, the universal diluent is turpentine shipped direct from Bordeaux to Messina. No vast amount of analytical talent is required to detect any considerable proportion of turpentine, and it is an indisputable fact that a guarantee of 8 per cent. of citral in an essence of lemon is by no means indicative of the entire absence of turpentine.

The production of diphtheria antitoxin serum is now being undertaken by the British Institute of Preventive Medicine. Already one horse is supplying a considerable quantity of serum and another will shortly be ready. As the work is under the supervision of Sir Joseph Lister, F. R. S., and is carried on without regard to profit, the genuine article will shortly be offered in quantity at about one-tenth of the price charged by the continental makers. This will be a boon to the poor in our hospitals and elsewhere.

Formalin, the name given by Schering's to a 40 per cent. solution of formic aldehyde in water, is attracting some attention. It is a powerful antiseptic and deodorant and is employed at the hospitals, particularly in the post mortem departments. It has the special advantage of not injuring metals, wood or linen, whilst its germicidal properties have been proved when diluted so that it contains but 1 per cent. of formalin. It is besides, a cheap disinfectant, as it is supplied in 1-oz. glass bottles at 60 cents. per doz., or in gallon jars at \$5 each.

The eternal rage for highly-concentrated preparations is illustrated by the latest liquor for the extemporaneous production of Easton's syrup. Messrs. Cooper & Co. have introduced a liquor, Eastoni, which is stated to mix with syrup of phosphate of iron, in the proportion of 1 part of liquor to 7 parts of syrup, and form the B. P. C. Syrup Eastoni. Previously manufacturers appear to have been satisfied with a 1-3 article, but the tendency to further concentration is well illustrated by this latest novelty.

Motion has been conveyed by electric wires a distance of 120 miles.

Edison claims it to be possible to measure the millionth part of a second.