

in the purview of the House, and that it was a private Bill.

Hon. Mr. Cameron said the Dentistry Bill, the Medical Bill, and the Law Society Bill, had been considered public Bills, and this was of a cognate character.

The Bill was then read a second time, and referred to a select committee, consisting of Messrs. Wood, Boulter, Baxter, Rykert, Pardee, Matchett, Blake and the mover.

A meeting of the Committee has been appointed for Tuesday, the 17th inst., when those gentlemen appointed by the Society will be in attendance to answer such inquiries or objections as may be advanced.

THE SALE OF POISONS CASES.

After three or four weeks deliberation, the Police Magistrate at length rendered his decision in the cases of prosecution for illegal sale of poison, and imposed on each of the offenders a fine of twenty-five dollars and costs. We understand that the druggists intend to carry the matter before a higher court, and as the evidence taken in the case tried as a test, was in some points defective, another case has been brought up and proceeded with. We hope by the time the appeal is made that the Pharmacy Bill, at present before the Legislature, will have become law; as, in that measure, the classification of "opium, and its preparations," including laudanum, is such as to show, at once, their true position in the category of poisons. It will be remembered that these compounds occupy a place on the secondary list, which includes those poisons not considered "deadly." This fact ought to have an influence, should matters turn out as we anticipate, and will undoubtedly affect favorably, the legal view of the case.

THE apostolic injunction, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might," is echoed in the following remarks, which appears in an American paper, and which we commend to the attention of both employer and employed:—

"The servant, man or woman, who begins a negotiation for service by inquiring what privileges are attached to the offered situation, and whose energy is spent chiefly in stipulations, and reservations, and conditions designed to 'lessen the burden' of the place, will not be found worth the hiring. The clerk whose last place was 'too hard for him' has a poor introduction to a new sphere of duty. There is only one spirit that ever achieves a great success. The man who seeks only how to make himself most useful, whose aim it is to render himself indispensable to his employer, whose whole being is animated with the purpose to fill the largest possible place in the walk assigned to him, has in the exhibition of that spirit the guarantee of success. He commands the situation, and shall walk in the light of prosperity all his

days. On the other hand, the man who accepts the unwholesome advice of the demagogue, and seeks only how little he may do, and how easy he may render his place, and not lose his employment altogether, is unfit for service, and as soon as a supernumerary is on the list, he becomes disengaged as the least valuable to his employers. The man who is afraid of doing too much is near akin to him who seeks to do nothing, and was begot in the same family; they are neither of them in the remotest degree a blood relation to the man whose willingness to do everything possible to his touch places him at the head of the active list."

EDITORIAL SUMMARY.

Detection of Chloral Alcoholate in the Hydrate.

In a communication to the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, of London, Mr. Umney alludes to the substitution of alcoholate of chloral for hydrate. As the former product can be sold at a much lower rate than the latter, it has already found its way into commerce, but not only is it inferior in chloral value, but Dr. Leibreich asserts that its medicinal properties are quite dissimilar to those of the hydrate. Mr. Umney suggests the following method for determining the value of commercial samples:—For testing the hydrate, take 500 grains of the salt, and dissolve in about one ounce of distilled water; transfer to a 1000-grain graduated tube, and make up the measure of the solution to 700 grain measures; to this add solution of caustic ammonia, (831) until the whole measures 1000 grains. Agitate; immerse the tube in warm water, to assist in the reaction, and set aside for twelve hours. Upon examination, the fluid will be found to have perfectly separated into two layers, the lower being chloroform, (from fine specimens of the hydrate nearly colorless), the upper, a deep sherry-colored solution of formiate of ammonia. The volume of the chloroform layer should not be less than 235 grain-measures, which, calculated at the sp. gr. of chloroform (1.497), would give 351.7 grains by weight, a quantity equal to about 70 per cent. (70.3) of the chloral compound employed. The alcoholate is tested in a similar manner. In this case the chloroform layer will be about 200 grain-measures, or by weight 299 grains, an equivalent of about 60 per cent. by weight (59.8) of the chloral alcoholate. Such a difference, it must be apparent, is of great importance, as the physiological action of chloral is principally due to its transformation into chloroform in the blood. An eye accustomed to the rate of solution of the hydrate in water can soon detect the alcoholate by its much less solubility. The hydrate in detached crystals, resembling crystals of sulphate of magnesia, is a much more soluble form than the ordinary hydrate

in masses; it will also produce upon decomposition with ammonia 70 per cent. by weight of chloroform. The difference in the boiling-point of the hydrate (95° Cent.) and of the alcoholate (116° Cent.) is alone almost sufficient to enable the pharmacist to give with accuracy an opinion upon the purity of any chloral hydrate.

The Microscope in Pharmacy.

Dr. Hale (*Am. Journal of Microscopy*), in speaking of the value of the microscope to the pharmacist, says that the deterioration to which many drugs are subject by being long kept may, in a great number of instances, be traced to the agency of animal-culce. In speaking of fungi he remarks:—

Unless the preserved substance can be kept absolutely free from moisture, its surface, and even its deepest interior, will become infected with fungi, that more or less rapidly destroy the integrity of its tissues, until the preparation made therefrom is useless as a medicinal agent. The leaves of *Atropa Belladonna*, the seeds of the *Conium Maculatum*, and various other powerful narcotic and poisonous substances, are probably rendered inert by the destructive process set up in their interior by fungi which obtain access to them.

These injurious changes are not discoverable to the unaided vision. It is notorious that the most carefully prepared tinctures and extracts of certain drugs are sometimes devoid of medicinal power. It has been supposed that certain volatile constituents escape from the substances from which such tinctures are prepared; but of this we have no certain proof. Why is it that the leaves of belladonna may in some instances be kept for years, and at the end of that period be capable of yielding a reliable preparation, while other specimens, when kept only a few months, are worthless? It must be because of some destructive process going on in the substance, which cannot be discovered with the naked eye.

In some of my experiments with the microscope, I have been able to detect the utter worthlessness of the leaves of belladonna and digitalis. In place of the healthy tissue, a mass of fungi appeared to monopolize the place. A thin section of the root of aconite, placed under a low magnifying power, has revealed the presence of such a quantity of fungi as to render the specimen worthless for the pharmacist. In other cases the substance of the root examined would be found destroyed by some insect, which had left only the debris of the tissue it had digested or destroyed in its migrations. The pharmacist should first learn to recognize the natural healthy appearance, under the microscope, of all the vegetable substances he works upon; then he should subject a specimen of every substance he prepares to a careful examination, and if he discovers the presence of vegetable or animal parasites, such substance should be rejected. The world is flooded with inert medicinal preparations. Doubtless many such preparations are made worthless by improper methods of manufacture; but it is my opinion that in many instances their worthlessness is due to the fact that the substances used have been injured by certain agencies which could have been discovered by the intelligent use of the microscope.