

those bodies last year, found that any of the crystalline bodies will prevent the growth of the tubercle bacillus, if present even in the proportion of 1 in 10,000, and concluded the drug was fatal even in that strength to the bacillus, thus confirming Korab's observations.

He further carried out experiments on animals with the alantane anhydride of Schuchardt, and a mixture of helenine with alantane anhydride, with the object of finding out the influence of the drug on the tuberculous process. The investigator was unable to procure pure helenine in sufficient quantities to test it alone. The results tended to prove that the administration of the bodies used exercised a real protective action against the disease. It is said anyone, or a mixture of elecampane derivatives, will answer the purpose of clinical experiment on the subject.

The investigations of recent years go to show the ancients did not altogether overestimate the medicinal value of this drug, and which has gradually almost dropped out of use.

With greater facilities for research, and the discovery of better and more economical processes for isolating its active principles, we shall probably find in the derivatives of elecampane root medicinal agents of the greatest value in treating tuberculous disease.—*British and Colonial Druggist*.

Note on a New Class of Liquid Extracts of One-Half the Strength of the Present Fluid Extracts.

BY OSCAR OLDBERG.

One of the many subjects receiving the careful attention of the Pharmacopœial Revision Committee is the question of the introduction of a class of liquid extracts of precisely one-half the strength of our present fluid extracts. This class of preparations has, for want of a recognized title, been spoken of as "50 per cent. tinctures," although, if these preparations are adopted into the Pharmacopœia, they will, of course, be so prepared that 100 C. c. (and not 100 Gm.) will represent 50 Gm. of drug. This class of preparations has also been, unfortunately and erroneously, spoken of as "half strength fluid extracts," although nobody has proposed to disturb the standard strength of the fluid extracts, for the very sufficient reason that the title "fluid extract" carries with it the idea of the already established strength, so that the title cannot be used for any class of preparations varying materially from that standard. A new and appropriate title for the new class of preparations will, of course, be adopted by the Pharmacopœial Revision Committee, if these preparations are made official.

The whole proposition, if the writer has judged correctly, is receiving more favorable attention than when first broached. This is easily understood from the fact that many opposed it because they assumed that it was intended to reduce the strength of the fluid extracts one-half,

while still giving the preparations the title of "fluid extracts"; while others again assumed that the new preparations would be called "tinctures," so that confusion would arise as between the new preparations and the now official tinctures of the same drugs. Both assumptions are erroneous.

Very few combat the statement that the new class of preparations would be preferable to both fluid extracts and tinctures, for two reasons. One important reason in favor of the new class of preparations is that the Pharmacists can readily prepare them, whilst they would find it impracticable, or at least they *think*, they find it impracticable, to make the fluid extracts of the same drug. The other reason is that many of the tinctures are much too weak, while the fluid extracts of the same drugs are necessarily strong, and it is hoped that the new preparations, being of one-half the strength of the fluid extracts, will take the place of both fluid extracts and tinctures in many cases, although this result can come only gradually.

It will hardly be disputed that such concentrated preparations as the fluid extracts of aconite, belladonna, capsicum and gelsemium are undesirable, and that such weak tinctures as those of bryonia, calumba, conium, cubeb, matico and many others that might be named, are much too weak. Again, the want of uniformity in the percentage strength of tinctures is an ever present theme of discussion and yet has never been materially diminished.

If fluid extracts can be made to properly represent the drug in accordance with the official standard, then, certainly, preparations of one-half that strength can be far more easily made.

The writer proposed that whenever any liquid extract of a new drug is to be introduced into the Pharmacopœia, that liquid extract shall be one of one-half the strength of our fluid extracts, and that no fluid extract or tincture of such a drug should be made official. It will be conceded that this proposition is a very moderate one, and it was made only because he felt that a majority might be found favorable to his plan, while a majority might oppose a greater innovation; and yet there can be no doubt that many of our fluid extracts might, with advantage, be dropped from the Pharmacopœia, and preparations of half their strength, with a new title, introduced in their place.

There is no danger that any one would propose such a change in the case of fluid extracts of great importance—such as are in constant use and have decided medicinal potency, but it is difficult to see how any serious inconvenience would result from abolishing, for instance, fluid extract and tincture of Bitter Orange Peel, and substituting for both another liquid preparation of mean strength.

As to the present tinctures, it would seem to be best to leave their strength undisturbed, as all efforts heretofore made to bring about any degree of uniformity have failed. It is the writer's belief that

after a new class of liquid preparations, between the tinctures and fluid extracts, shall have been introduced, the fluid extracts and tinctures of the same drugs will fall into "innocuous desuetude," and may finally be dropped from the Pharmacopœia if it should be thought too rash to drop them now.

To drop any fluid extract or tincture from the Pharmacopœia of course does not preclude its use, and with reference to fluid extracts, it is of course understood what their strength is whether they are official or not.

A complete list of the new liquid extracts (it is not likely that the new preparations will be called *liquid extracts*, officially), should be introduced, including such preparations of the following named drugs: Aconite, Arnica, Aromatic Powder, Aspidosperma, Bitter Orange Peel, Brayera, Buchu, Calamus, Calumba, Canabasis Indica, Capsicum, Chimaphila, Chirata, Cimicifuga, Cinchona, Colchicum, Conium, Cubeb, Cypripedium, Digitalis, Ergot, Erythroxylon, Eucalyptus, Eunymus, Eupatorium, Frangula, Gelsemium, Glycyrrhiza, Cotton Root Bark, Grindelia, Guarana, Hamamelis, Hydrastis, Hyoscyamus, Ipecac, Iris Versicolor, Juglans, Krameria, Lactucarium, Leptandra, Lobelia, Lupulin, Matico, Mezereum, Nux Vomica, Pareira, Physostigma, Pilocarpus, Podophyllum, Wild Cherry, Quassia, Rhubarb, Rhus Glabra, Rhus, Rumex, Savine, Sanguinaria, Sarsaparilla, Squill, Scutellaria, Senega, Senna, Serpentaria, Spigelia, Stillingia, Stramonium, Taraxacum, Uva Ursi, Valerian, Veratrum, Viride, Viburnum, Xanthoxylum, and Ginger.—*The Apothecary*.

Cocaine in India.

Some time ago an inquiry was instituted through the Secretary of State, by Dr. Macnamara of Madras, as to whether the hydrochlorate of cocaine could not be economically manufactured either by the Government opium agencies, or at one of the sulphate of quinine factories in India. According to a recent article in an Allahabad paper, it appears that the matter has been submitted to a careful consideration, and it was found that there should be no difficulty in extracting the alkaloid cocaine in a laboratory such as that possessed by the Medical Stores Department at Madras, with which Dr. Macnamara is connected. On reference, however, to the Surgeon-General, it was found that the total annual consumption of the drug amounted to only 4½ lbs. avoirdupois, and so it was decided that for the present it would not be worth while making it. The *Erythroxylon coca* has now been cultivated for several years in many parts of the Presidency of Madras. It grows like a weed, we are told, and the yield of cocaine from the leaves is fully equal to that obtained from the South American shrub. Should there happen to be at any future time a larger demand for this alkaloid, there would be no difficulty whatever in obtaining a very large supply of the leaves.