

### It Belongs to the Druggist.

The ownership of the prescription has been settled by law in New York, Massachusetts, and a few other states, says the *Albany Medical Annals*. They all give the prescription to the druggist. Some time ago a judge of a court in Berlin, Germany, gave a similar decision. The text of the decision from the judge of the Supreme Court of one of our states is as follows. "The question before the court seems to be very simple, indeed. A patient applies to a physician and receives from him certain advice, for which he tenders a fee. The physician hands a piece of paper to the patient, purporting to be a written order for certain goods called drugs, which order is filled by a merchant or apothecary. The payment of the fee and the delivery of the goods or drugs terminates the verbal contract, and the druggist keeps the prescription as an evidence that the contract has been fulfilled, as far as he is concerned. The druggist can, if he so please, on his own responsibility, renew the drugs, for he is but a merchant, and has a perfect right to sell drugs to anyone and in any shape. He need not keep the prescription, nor is he bound to give a copy, but should error occur, he has no protection in case of suit."—*The Pharmacologist*.

### Adulteration of Olive Oil by Castor oil.

Ferraro Annibale states that the adulteration of olive oil by castor oil has risen to such a degree that the Italian Government intends to legislate against the practice. A simple test will suffice to detect this falsification, since castor oil will dissolve readily in absolute or high-grade alcohol and itself dissolves fuchsin. The reagent consists of 25 vols. of alcohol and 1.2 vols. of a 0.05 per cent. solution of fuchsin in alcohol, and 25 parts of this mixture are carefully poured into a tube containing 5 parts of the oil to be tested, the height of the plane of contact being marked by a strip of gummed paper or other means. The tube is then agitated for a few minutes, and left at rest for half an hour, whereupon the alteration in the level of contact will afford a direct measure of the castor oil originally present in the oil and extracted by the alcohol. The method is equally adapted for the detection of adulteration in castor oil itself. —*Bolletino Pharm.*

### Pearl Coating Pills.

The following paper was read at the meeting of the Edinburgh Chemists' Assistants' Association:

Mr. James Gauld stated that after being made, the pills should be allowed to dry for a day or two. They should then receive two coats of varnish (either tolu one drachm and ether one ounce, or sandarac one part and absolute alcohol one part). This prevents pitting and the

exudation of essential oil, which colors the coating. The apparatus for coating consists of three covered pots, a sieve, and a marble slab. The coating-powder is French chalk, or a mixture of French chalk and starch (one drachm to one ounce), which is whiter. A small quantity of Martindale's mucilage of tragacanth (four grs. to one ounce, with one drachm sp. vin. rect.) is placed in one of the covered pots, and the pills are evenly coated with this by shaking them up in the pot. They are then transferred to a covered pot containing the chalk, and rotated for a minute or so. Then they are turned into the sieve, which removes excess of chalk. They are then placed upon the slab, and carefully rolled under the palm of the hand gently, and gradually increasing the pressure as the coating dries. They are next turned into a clean pot, and rotated gently so as to make the coating adhere more firmly. The process is then repeated, two coatings being sufficient. To give the pills the high polish so much desired, they should be allowed to stand for a day to dry, then vigorously rotate them for some time in a clean smooth covered pot. For prescription pills the same perfect finish cannot be obtained, but with a little practice two or three dozen pills can be finished satisfactorily in about fifteen minutes. Pink pills are easily made by adding a little carmine to the chalk. —*Mo. Mag. Phar.*

### Detecting Nitrites.

Lambelli recommends the following colorimetric method for determining nitrites. A reagent is made by dissolving 2 grammes of sulphanilic acid and 2 grammes of phenol in 50 cc. of equal parts of sulphuric acid and water. A measured quantity of the solution to be tested is placed in a flask, and 2 or 3 cc. of the above solution added. In ten to fifteen minutes the solution is made just alkaline with ammonia; if nitrous acid be present a yellow coloration will be produced. This color is matched by repeating the reaction, using a standard solution of silver nitrite.—*Four. Soc. Chem.*

### Drugs Made in Germany.

The *Medical Record* says that a German pharmaceutical journal is authority for the estimate that 117 new drugs were brought on the market in Germany during six months last year. It is said that there are already more than 10,000 different medicinal substances in use. If the introduction of new therapeutic agents is continued at the present rate for the next fifty years the consequences will be appalling. It will take a large sized book to even mention them. An encyclopedia will be required to describe them. The medical student of the next century will have a great deal to learn.

### An Electric Plant.

Nicaragua produces a plant which appears to be charged with electricity to such an extent that, if its branches are touched with the bare hand, a perfect shock is felt, similar to that given by electricity. It influences the magnetic needle at a distance of half a dozen yards, and the nearer it is placed the greater this influence is apparent, while if the instrument is placed in the centre of the bush a steady circular movement is observable. The time of day exerts a marked influence upon the activity of the plant, the maximum of its electrical influence being evinced at about two o'clock in the afternoon, while during the night it appears to have no effect whatever. Stormy weather increases its remarkable demonstrations. The plant is called the *Phytolacca electrica*.

### Business Maxims.

The good will and esteem of all your employees is especially desirable.

Always be busy. See that your store is not a place for loafers.

Be conscientious, careful, and economical, though generous.

Take an interest in your customers' and your employees' welfare.

Above all things, be exactly what you pretend to be. Possess a character unimpeachable.

Always have your place of business open promptly and at a stated time.

Never be too busy to settle accounts and receive money due.

Always treat your customers pleasantly and politely.

Ambition is a business necessity, but conceit is a stumbling block to success.

What you do, do thoroughly; leave nothing half done.

Enterprise and "goaheadtiveness" are as essential as capital.

A progressive age demands the progressive business man.

An untiring effort is bound to win in the end.

Push, perseverance, and sound judgment pave the way to success.

—*Iron Age*.

### Oil of Spike.

True oil of spike is obtained from *Lavandula spica*, a native of maritime Southern France, where its distillation is an important industry. "Spike" is the corruption of "aspic," the colloquial French term. Much of the commercial spike oil is little more than turpentine flavored with the genuine "essence d'aspic." —*Phar. Jour.*