

BREVITIES.

CASTOR OIL.—Hazura and Grüssner, as the result of experiment, have arrived at the conclusion that of all the fatty oils examined so far castor oil is the only one which contains no oleine.

MORPHINE.—Knoro, working on methyl-morphimethine methiodide, has obtained results which show that of the three carbon atoms in morphine one is attached to the nitrogen atom as methyl, so that the alkaloid cannot contain a pyridine-ring.

OLIVE OIL.—Hazura and Grüssner have made a searching examination of the oxidation products of the liquid fatty acids of olive oil, the result of which points to the fact that both oleic and linoleic acids are present in the oil, and in all probability they exist in most non-drying oils.

THE SOLUBILITY OF CHLORATE OF POTASSIUM.—Mr. Alver Findlay, in a paper read to the Edinburgh Chemists' Assistants' Association recently, showed that at 40° F. the solubility of this salt in water is only 1 in 20. He also stated that the presence of tincture of perchloride of iron in a mixture materially increased the solubility of potassium chlorate, and that even in the cold chlorine was slowly liberated. The addition of glycerine was found to diminish the solubility.

ICE AS A PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCT may soon be a matter of fact, if the advice of a number of medical societies in Germany is taken by the Pharmacopoeial Commission of that land. The Pharm Post says that several organizations of physicians have passed resolutions requesting the Commission to admit ice into the Pharmacopoeia. The District of Baden has long had a law which requires apothecaries to always keep on hand ice for medical purposes. Outside the elementary experiments of the apprentice, when he first reads the chapter on "artificial cold" in his natural philosophy, we doubt that any ice will ever be manufactured in the drug store.

INSECT POWDER has been used as a dressing for ulcers and wounds, to prevent the formation of maggots. It also answers to preserve dried insects and plants in cabinet collections.

ACACINE is a white powder looking and tasting a great deal like acacia, but is not so bulky. To the touch it appears considerably like pulverised arrowroot. An eminent chemist, says Mr. G. G. Allen, in the Registered Pharmacist, suggests that the manufacturer has succeeded in extracting the mucilage from Irish moss, the result being, when finished, a preparation which is put on the market as acacine. It produces an emulsion almost instantly, and one that is apparently complete when examined in the bottle as finished. In preparing the emulsion of cod-liver oil with acacine, no amount of

trituration will reduce the size of the globules to that of an acacia emulsion. After taking an egg-beater and beating the acacine emulsion, and comparing it with acacia emulsion, it was found that the oil globules of the latter were at least a half smaller than those of the acacine emulsion. The acacia emulsion separates, but the acacine one does not.

A PHARMACIST in Warsaw was recently making up a prescription consisting of 32 parts of chlorate of potassium and 4 parts of tannic acid, and on adding a few drops of oil of peppermint to flavour it the mixture exploded with great force, doing considerable damage. A St. Petersburg pharmacist has dispensed the prescription with the same result.

SOLUTIONS OF TARTARIC AND CITRIC ACIDS are, according to Reinhardt, preserved by the addition of salicylic acid; $\frac{1}{10}$ per cent. of salicylic acid (on the weight of dry substance) is sufficient for a solution of tartaric acid, and $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for a solution of citric acid. So treated, they may be kept for years in quite good condition.

A DEFECTIVE PHARMACY ACT.—The Pharmacy Act of New South Wales does not wear very well. For some time past the New South Welshmen have shown a singular taste for "Rough on Rats," and as this remedy for all the ills of life is little besides pure arsenic, it has at least the merit of certainty. In order to check the too free indulgence in this luxury, "Rough on Rats" was gazetted in the usual form into the poisons schedule. But the first time an attempt was made to punish a vendor who had not observed the necessary formalities, it was found that the proclamation was ultra vires, as clause 7 of the Act exempts from its operation "poisonous mixtures for the destruction of vermin." It is a curious complication though that the 4th section enacts that "it shall not be lawful to buy or sell any poison for the avowed purpose of destroying rats or other vermin infesting houses, unless the purchaser be a householder." But the framers of the Bill thoughtfully saved the courts trouble in regard to this section by omitting to attach any penalty to its infringement. The Sydney papers, which comment in severe terms on the failure of the Act to protect the public, account for its imperfections by explaining that those who drafted it had their minds fixed on the object of getting an official status for the Pharmaceutical Society, "as the association of druggists is learnedly self-styled."

A NEW HYPNOTIC.—Drs. Hagen and Huefner have just issued a report on a new hypnotic called chloralamide, which is stated to induce sleep immediately after taking; the dose is from 80 to 45 grains dissolved in wine, or given in wafers. It was tried in twenty-eight cases, and was successful in twenty-six of them, no injurious secondary effects being observed.

SULPHONAL AS A NARCOTIC.

At the annual meeting of the Dominion Medical Association, held at Banff, Dr. James Stewart, of Montreal, presented the histories of fifty-two cases in which sulphonal had been administered for the purpose of procuring sleep. When severe pain was present he found the drug useless, but in those cases where sleeplessness was present without pain it was highly useful. In those neurotic cases where the morphia or chloral habit had been developed it was the means of securing beneficial sleep when given in twenty-grain doses. There was, he believed, no fear of the habit being established, as in the commonly used narcotics. No depression of the heart had been noticed from its use. The dose is from fifteen to twenty grains—the ordinary dose being twenty grains. Larger doses are known to produce atoxic symptoms.

Dr. Whittaker, of Cincinnati, spoke from experience in the use of sulphonal, and confirmed all that Dr. Stewart had said in its favour. As an agent to procure sleep he considered we had in it a most valuable remedy. He had used it in large doses, giving as much as half an ounce within three or four hours, and had never seen any danger, or the least symptom of danger, from its use. There were persons who could not sleep while travelling on a train or steamboat. Such persons might have a good night's sleep, free from any objectionable after-effects, by taking early in the evening fifteen grains of sulphonal. He believed that it was no use whatever as an anodyne, but given in those cases requiring such a remedy it was a new and highly valuable remedy.

DRUGGISTS AS OPTICIANS.

The question is frequently asked, "Why do so many people nowadays wear glasses?" The answer is easily given. Within the last twenty or twenty-five years much has been learned about the value of glasses, and their range of usefulness has been largely extended; as a consequence, people are taking better care of their eye-sight, and statistics show that the number of persons losing their sight has greatly diminished. Again, the eyes need more help now than formerly, because every year the amount of work they are required to do increases greatly—new employments, closer application, the more extended reading of cheap literature and newspapers all combine to overtax the eye and render it liable to give way in the continued strain and struggle of work. This being the case, glasses are coming