

prescription is committed to his hands with no primary request for its return after being filled, and he has affixed his marks of identity and compounded it, he should retain the original copy as legal evidence that he has prepared such a prescription.

As showing the legal value of a prescription it may be of interest to state that Mr. Robert England informs me, he has been subpoenaed in three cases within the last three years to produce certain original prescriptions for the purposes of first, To prove attendance in a suit for medical services. Suit was won. Second, To prove that a physician used drugs for malpractice. Physician convicted, and, third, To prove that a medical student illegally practiced medicine. In this latter case, the patient dying, and the student being unable to give a certificate of death, the case was examined by the coroner, and when confronted with the prescription confessed guilty. In each instance, however, the legal authorities returned the prescriptions, thus tacitly admitting their ownership.

But this whole question of prescription ownership, to my mind, is essentially one of law, and viewing it from that standpoint, it presents some most interesting features. I have been fortunate in securing for this afternoon's meeting an expression of opinion from that eminent authority on civil law, Mr. Richard C. McMurtrie, of this city.

He writes as follows :

BELLITT BUILDING, Jan. 15, 1891.

DEAR SIR,—You ask who is the owner of a prescription? The physician who writes it, the patient for whose use it is written, or the apothecary to whom it is handed to compound?

Evidently the only dispute can exist in a case in which the physician and the patient have parted with the possession of the paper, and it has lawfully come into the hands of the apothecary, at the instance of the patient.

The universal practice appears to me to point where the title is for all purposes but one. I presume it is the custom to refill a bottle with a prescription indicated on the label. The patient is not required to purchase a new prescription every time he wishes the order filled—and this appears to me plain, from the consideration that he could secure this by copying the paper before using it.

Moreover, he has paid for the composition and skill required for that purpose, and the delivery to the apothecary is for a particular object, and there is in that transaction nothing implying a transfer of property in anything by the patient to the apothecary.

But the practice certainly is for the apothecary to retain the documents. I presume no one ever heard of a prescription being returned with the dose to the patient.

It is obvious there is nothing indicative of a sale or transfer of title on that footing in this transaction. There is something analogous in respect of a check. The return of these instruments arises out of distinct considerations. Accepted bills are never returned to the drawer if paid.

Then there is a consideration which I consider conclusive, seeing that the thing is open to a contract, and the parties have chosen to make none. If under this view of the case the usage is not of itself conclusive, I think the apothecary has the right to retain, to warrant himself, if a question shall arise, as to correctness of conduct.

I may add—the claimant must always show his title—if the title be in equipoise he must fail.

It also occurs to me that this paper is merely a substitute for a verbal direction, and no doubt there are multitudes of verbal orders filled that might be written.

On the whole, I should think there ought to be no doubt that the apothecary may, if he sees fit and is foolish enough to run the risk, put the paper in the fire. There can be no half-way measure, he either owns it absolutely, or not at all. There can be no duty to produce it for inspection, or to give copies, while it would be silly to refuse to do so when reasonably demanded.

It is very unusual in this country to look to the consequence of a rule. It may be well to do so. If the patient is the owner, he may at any time within six years demand the paper, and if it is not surrendered sue as for a tortious conversion of his property. If he can't do this he certainly has no title. I would ask if Executors ever inquired for prescriptions given his testator; if they belong to the testator, they are assets.

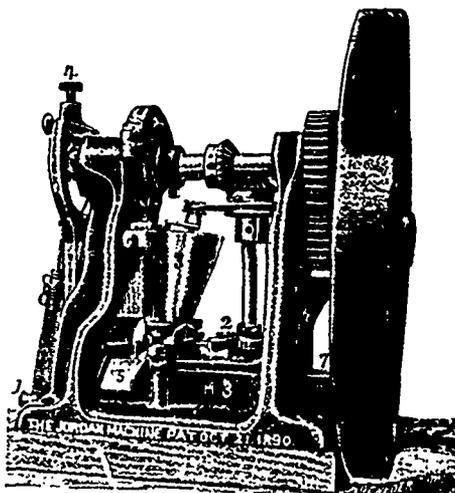
R. C. McMURTRIE.

A New Tablet Machine.

BY F. W. JORDAN, PH. G.

Read at the Pharmaceutical Meeting of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, May 19th.

The large use made at the present time of compressed tablets induced the writer to endeavor to devise a machine which



would enable the retail druggist to make tablets for prescription purposes, and which would be large enough to be used during his spare time in making tablets for replenishing his stock. Nearly all the machines which have heretofore been invented have been too large and too expensive for the use of the pharmacist, and the making of tablets has heretofore been mostly confined to the manufacturers. Realizing that economy of space was a primo requisite in contriving a machine for the pharmacist, every effort was made to make it as compact as possible, and yet strong enough in all its parts to be durable and powerful enough to resist a pressure equal to five times that required.

The arrangement of the machine is readily understood from the cut; it weighs sixty pounds, occupies a counter space of six by twelve inches and stands twelve inches high; the movements are positive and automatic, having an adjustment whereby the feed can be regulated to the $\frac{1}{8}$ part of a grain, and the pressure so as to make the tablets of any degree of hard-

ness. The feed-can being nicely adjusted on the bed-plate prevents any waste of material, and is so shaped with an inside agitator that makes the feed so positive and regular that when the machine is set for a given number of tablets, the last one will be as accurate and perfect as the first one. The bed-plate moves but a short distance and carries the bottom die under the feed-can for supplies, and to the plunger, where the material is compressed and the tablet ejected. There are four sets of dies, made of the best steel, highly polished, producing tablets well shaped, and with edges perfect as possible to make them. The fly-wheel is of sufficient diameter to make its running easy to the operator. The machine is neat in appearance being ornamented with nickel trimmings, and nicely painted in brown and gold.

In conclusion, the writer ventures to express the hope that he has been able to devise a machine which will furnish his brother pharmacists with a means of aiding his pecuniary advancement as well as developing his professional standing, by enabling him to improve his reputation amongst physicians by showing his ability to make his own preparations, rather than confining his energies to simply selling the productions of others.

TACSONY, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Tariff Changes.

THE following are the changes in tariff affecting the drug trade :

	OLD TARIFF.	NEW TARIFF.
Ethyl Alcohol, gin, rum, whiskey and other alcoholic liquors.....	\$2 per gallon	\$2.12½ per gal
Amyl alcohol or fusel oil.....	\$2 per gallon	\$2.12½ per gal
Methyl alcohol, wood alcohol, naphtha, brandy, etc.....	\$2 per gallon	\$2.12½ per gal
Spirits and strong waters, elixirs, essences, extracts, lotions, etc.....	\$2 per gallon and 30 p. c.	\$2.12½ per gal and 30 p. c.
Alcoholic perfumes and perfumed spirits, etc., when in bottles containing less than four ounces.....	50 per cent. ad valorem	50 per cent. ad valorem
Do. when in larger bottles.....	\$2 per gallon and 40 p. c.	\$2.12½ per gal and 40 p. c.
Nitrous ether, sweet spirits of nitre, aromatic spirits..	\$2 per gallon and 30 p. c.	\$2.12½ per gal and 30 p. c.

This will necessitate an advance of nearly 40 cents a gallon on alcohol, mythylated spirit, ether, spts. sweet nitre, and all alcoholic preparations will also be advanced in price.

CANADIAN TURPENTINE.—Of late we have been offered, through the London market, Canadian turpentine. The climate of Canada excludes, in all probability, however, the culture of the turpentine-yielding trees. An analytical chemist in Hamburg found that the Canadian turpentine is largely petroleum. It had a specific gravity of 0.8115.—*Apoth. Zeitung.*

The man who does a good turn to a neighbor to day, will find somebody doing a good turn to him next year. This is an eternal law.