

## LABORATORY NOTES.

BY D. L. HAIGH, PH. C.

The question of the purity of drugs is of such vital importance to the pharmacist that he cannot afford to longer ignore it. The time has passed when inferior quality of goods can be handled with impunity. Each year marks the curtailment of profits heretofore derived from "general merchandise," and the pharmacist of necessity must look for other means to replenish his depleted exchequer. The time points to science as that means, and we are urged by the thinkers of our calling to become more professional, to prepare ourselves to take advantage of the opportunity that will offer itself. The pharmacist must be the future chemist of his community. Not alone must he handle only pure drugs and prove their purity by examination, but he will also be required to examine foods for adulteration, and to be the expert in cases of criminal and accidental poisoning. It behooves the pharmacist to prepare for this work. We cannot hope for this change to take place hurriedly. All such changes are gradual, and there are many who will never change. We have instances of "ye olden-time pharmacist" with us now, and it is not possible for it to be otherwise in the future. But the inevitable comes, and the pharmacy of fifty years hence will be as different from that of to-day as our present pharmacist differ from those of twenty-five years ago. It is with this idea in view that it was thought well to bring to notice, through this medium, many of those simpler methods of testing drugs within reach of every druggist, hoping thereby to interest some in a work which, should they engage in, will be amply repaid in pleasure alone for the time expended. In these notes we claim no originality, but simply strive to select those methods adapted for use in the retail store. This will necessitate giving methods that are not always the most accurate, but in no case will faulty methods be given without attention being called to the fact.

It is the general idea among pharmacists that to test drugs, complicated apparatus is necessary and a great amount of time must be occupied. If the trial is once made it is surprising how much can be accomplished with the apparatus that is found in every drug store. The time is not more than what every pharmacist can spare if he desires. One-half hour a day would be sufficient if industriously spent, to accomplish a great deal of work.

## NECESSARY REAGENTS.

Each pharmacist can prepare his own reagents, following the pharmacopœial directions for "Test Solutions." The majority of articles necessary for this are found in every drug store, and those few that are not can be purchased from the wholesaler.

With the addition of the following apparatus, all is at hand that is necessary for work.

One three-ring iron filter stand; one test tube stand; one test tube brush; two funnels; two glass flasks one piece blue glass; one round file; two stirring rods; two watch glasses; one porcelain evaporating dish, one triangular file; one scissors, one piece platinum foil; one piece copper foil; one hydrogen sulphide apparatus; one alcohol lamp; nineteen test tubes; one washbottle (Spritz flask); two beaker glasses; one crucible tongs; one blowpipe; one piece platinum wire; one piece pure zinc.

The total cost of this apparatus is not more than five dollars. In fact, most of the articles mentioned are in every drug store, and with test tubes and the pharmacopœial test solutions the greater number of tests of the pharmacopœia can be made. It is convenient to have these test solutions kept in two-ounce glass-stoppered bottles placed, preferably on small shelves, in some convenient place where they can be gotten at handily. Near the prescription-case is best, for if the reagents are handy they will be used more frequently.—Meyers Bros. Druggist.

ITALIAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.—The second General Congress of the Italian Pharmaceutical Association has just been held in Rome. The members, upwards of 3,000 in number, were largely represented, many of the leading pharmacists from Turin to Palermo assisted at the proceedings. Besides discussions on the new edition of the "Pharmacopœia Italica," on the status of the profession, and on its claims to recognition by the Government, the programme includes the special consideration of the higher culture of the pharmacists, for which object the universities were memorialised to grant greater facilities; while, for the possessors of academic qualifications, it was arranged that the Ministry of Health should be approached with a view to their being made eligible for appointments in the departments of State medicine, especially as directors of laboratories of chemistry in its application to public hygiene.—British and Colonial Druggist.

ACTION OF CHLORAL ON GLASS.—A writer in Pharm. Central. calls attention to the peculiar effect of some chloral hydrate that he had preserved in a blue glass bottle. In course of time, the blue color of the bottle faded, and finally, disappeared altogether, while the crystals of chloral nearest the glass became colored a deep blue. An analysis of these blue crystals disclosed the fact that they contained traces of nickle, that element, as is known, entering into glass a coloring agent.

It would be interesting to know if other glass white or colored, is liable to such decompositions in the presence of chloral, and we would ask our readers to let us know of any experience they may have had in this line.

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