

Pharmacy in England.

Erasmic Soap—Effective Window Displays—Formaldehyde as a Proprietary Disinfectant—New Book of Formulæ—Publication of the British Pharmacopœia 1898—Influenza on the Wane.

(From our own Correspondent)

During a recent visit to one of the south coast winter resorts I noticed that many of the chemists have gone in for window displays of Crossfield's Erasmic Soap, which has lately been extensively pushed by the proprietors. The soap is wrapped in a violet-colored paper and boxed in an effective dark olive-green box. From a sort of family resemblance in the displays I should imagine that the accompaniments are supplied free with a fair order of soap. These consist of several yards of yellow silk for draping the sides and back of window, bunches of artificial violets and leaves, etc. The contrast is very attractive and invariably causes attention—the boxes of soap and piles of tablets being displayed to the best advantage. The drawback appeared to me chiefly in the fact that so many were doing the same thing; but the idea is one that I have repeatedly suggested in this journal. There is no reason why a druggist should not do the same sort of thing at periodical intervals with his own specialties, where the profits would be larger and his neighbor would not be likely to clash. For instance, an effective display of lavender water, lavender smelling-salts, lavender-scented cloudy ammonia, etc., might be followed by hair preparations. These should have bright labels, such as red and gold, and an elegant background of dark green plush. A complete series would include hair-wash, hair-restorer or dye, bay rum, brilliantine, liquid shampoo, pomades, etc. This display might be followed by one of a more medicinal nature—such as cod liver oil, cod liver oil emulsion, extract of malt, with cod liver oil and other similar household remedies. A friend of mine in the colonies is doing this, and at the same time each week he has an advertisement in the principal local papers drawing attention to the leading specialty which is being exhibited that week. This is illustrated by an electro, something after the style used by the Cuticura proprietors, which is not elaborate but understood at a glance.

I recently referred to the progress that formaldehyde is making as a disinfecting agent, and it has since occurred to me

that druggists might do well to introduce this article under a fancy name as a general disinfectant. For this purpose the 40 per cent. solution, which is usually sold wholesale, should be diluted in the proportion of half an ounce of formaldehyde in a pint of water. As the public do not like disinfectants to be odorless, it would be a good plan to add a few drops of terebene or eucalyptus oil, so that the diluted liquid has a slight odor. The general directions might include its use as a gargle, diluted with an equal volume of water, in catarrh and sore throat. For ringworm, it should be applied on lint and remain in contact with the affected part for ten minutes, two or three times a day. As a disinfectant and deodorant the liquid should be sprayed into the room once or twice a day in severe infectious cases, and a sheet saturated with the solution be suspended over the door. It is also advisable to place some of the solution in a food-warming apparatus, heated by a night light, placed in the centre of the room, so that the solution gently evaporates without boiling, and a steady current of formaldehyde is disengaged. In mild cases the solution could be allowed to spontaneously evaporate from one or two soup plates exposed in the room. About a tablespoonful of this liquid should be placed in the utensils in order to obtain perfect sterilization of the excretions. The disinfectant should receive a fancy name, and the utmost made of its special properties of not staining and harmless nature.

One of our trade journals, *The Chemist and Druggist*, is bringing out a book of formulæ, something after the style of that published several years ago by *The British and Colonial Druggist*. It is being edited by a member of the staff, P. McEwan, F.C.S., whose name is a guarantee of careful revision, and that practical common-sense will be brought to bear upon the mass of material at his disposal. But the fact remains that these published formulæ are, as a rule, of shockingly inferior merit. Too often they are devised by people who never think of examining the product critically and comparing it with what is already known. As an instance, the

journal in question not long ago published a formula for aromatic toilet vinegar that consisted merely of dilute acetic acid and a few common essential oils dissolved in an altogether inadequate proportion of spirit. The author probably concocted this on the spur of the moment, and certainly never could have tried it, as such wretched stuff would not pass muster anywhere. Many of these so-called new formulæ are only arm-chair amended editions of formulæ published years ago in various journals or books of receipts. The superior enlightenment of modern knowledge is shown by substituting citral for oil of lemon in a recipe for essence of lemon or heliotropia for extract heliotrope in a perfume. Those who have been called upon for preparations and have looked up all the published formulæ generally discover that nothing quite satisfactory has appeared, and that further experimenting is required to elaborate a really first-rate article. Naturally when this is obtained the result is not communicated broadcast.

The death of Sir Richard Quain, president of the General Medical Council, and, therefore, head of the Pharmacopœia Committee, will not delay the production of that long-expected volume. Messrs. Spottiswoode & Co., the Queen's printers, have received the contract for publishing the 1898 B.P., but do not expect that it will be ready until May or June. The volume will be some 50 pages larger than its predecessors in spite of the careful pruning process, and the extra cost of production is to be met by increased price. This has been fixed at \$2.50. In spite of all the congratulatory remarks that have recently been uttered by the members of the medical committee, that did not do the work, those who appear to take most interest in the new volume are students preparing for the pharmaceutical qualification. The wholesale houses are also apparently interested because the alteration in many of the forms will require for some time duplicate preparations being kept—those of 1885 and 1898 B.P. respectively. But I am assured by one of the members of the committee that this has been borne in mind, and that very little inconvenience is likely to result.

The influenza fiend has been busy, but nothing like a panic or even an epidemic has occurred. A good many cases are improperly attributed to influenza, and an ordinary bronchial catarrh is elevated into the more popular disease at the moment. Still the medical profession has been busy, and although many cases occur the treatment is now so clearly recognized that unless unfavorable symptoms of pneumonia or other complications ensue, the progress is usually quite satisfactory.