

out a touch of the green monster. I am pleased to be able to say that, with a few trifling exceptions, Victoria druggists have thus far succeeded in working amicably together, and uniformity in prices is the order of things.

In legislation 1895 is a golden year in the history of pharmacy in British Columbia. The pharmacy law of 1891 was a very poor affair, but the improvements made by the amendments of 1895, which became law in February, have furnished a pharmacy law equal to any in the Dominion.

Now as to the future. This province is recognized as a mining province, and with good cause: for without doubt there are millions of dollars in gold, silver, copper, and coal alone yet to be unearthed. The impetus given to mining during this year is but an earnest of what is to follow: for the next three years will undoubtedly see some great developments throughout the province. Hence prospects are encouraging, and though it will take time to recover from the universal depression, better times are ahead.

Then we are in hopes of furnishing means of study for the rising pharmacist in this province. At present there is no university: but with the completion of the parliament buildings at Victoria, and the immediate establishment of a school of mines, lectures in pharmacy, botany, chemistry, etc., may be confidently expected.

Mr. Frank Coyderman has disposed of his interest in the firm of Dean & Coyderman to Mr. E. H. Hiscocks, who for upwards of twenty years has been head clerk in the retail department of Messrs. Langley & Co., Victoria. Mr. Hiscocks was presented with a very handsome marble timepiece by his late employers upon his leaving.

Mr. Dean seems to have a taste for new partners just now, for on November 14th he united his fortunes with those of Miss Tite, of Victoria. Hence the store which was till November run by bachelors will hereafter be managed by old married men.

C. E. Jones' new "P.P.P.P." is a store unique in almost every particular. It is handsomely finished in oak. The counter runs along the end of the store instead of the sides, as usually seen. At the rear of this counter is the dispensing department, and at the rear of this again the sitting room, bedroom and bathroom, for the use of the "always open" drug store night clerk. This is pure enterprize.

A "Frog-in-the-throat" window has been put in by John Cochrane, Victoria—the first in Victoria.

OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED.—The anticipated combination of manufacturers of heavy chemicals in this country and Europe has been officially announced, and the effect on the price of certain heavy chemicals is already observed.

Pharmaceutical Testing.

BY HARNARD S. PROCTOR.

Pharmacists apparently require frequently reminding of their responsibility regarding the sale of any article named in the B.P. to supply it of B.P. quality, and the consequent necessity of examining preparations which they do not make for themselves. Probably few now make mercurial ointment. In my establishment there has been none made for fifty years, excepting one or two experimental batches, and our purchases during the same period have only yielded us two samples that raised any suspicion of questionable quality. One of these looked unusually pale in color, and proved to have globules of mercury still visible: the other was unusually dark. Both were obtained from makers of high repute, and both proved to contain the legitimate proportion of mercury: nevertheless, it may interest the trade to have an account of a simple method of dispensing counter testing I have recently adopted, which yields fairly accurate results in the hands of minor men. It may be performed as follows:

Mercurial ointment, ʒij. Put it in a small flask, and add:

Benzol.	ʒij.
Water.	ʒij.
Iodide of potassium.	ʒss.
Iodine.	gr. 23.

Warm till the ointment melts. Shake till the iodine dissolves. The brown color should disappear, the resulting liquor being turbid and rather dirty looking, but not brown, otherwise there is a deficiency of mercury. Two grains more iodine being added, the brown color is permanently restored. The theoretical quantity of iodine for neutrality is 24.6 grains, and the defining of the quantity as between 23 and 25 is probably as close as should be looked for in pharmaceutical work, and that no doubt would have sufficed to save our North London friends from the annoyance of public prosecution.

A test for the strength of tannin solutions which I devised some years ago, but have not hitherto published, may also have some interest, though not in relation to drug adulteration. It was brought into use a few days ago when a lady brought a few ounces of a tannin gargle, which she had obtained in another part of the kingdom, and desired we should prepare a further supply of the preparation having the same tannin strength.

Though tannin is slowly and imperfectly precipitated from its aqueous solutions by iron salts generally, the ferric salts are precipitated better than ferrous, and the acetate better than the chloride, and the presence of alcohol renders the precipitation speedy and complete. A solution was prepared by mixing:

Tinct. ferri perchlor. B.P.	ʒss.
Liq. ammon. acet. fort.	ʒss.
Spirit meth.	ʒij. M.

This solution was found to effect the complete precipitation of the tannin from an equal volume of a solution containing

ʒi. of tannin in two ounces, the solvent being weakly alcoholic. When the solutions are mixed, a thick, black magma is immediately produced, in which settling of the precipitate would be quite hopeless, but if a drop is let fall upon bibulous paper, a black spot is formed, surrounded by a nearly colorless margin, and the neutrality of this margin may be readily indicated by its not developing color when touched by a drop of either of the reagents—iron or tannin.

The most convenient mode of operating is to make a number of spots of the iron solution upon white blotting paper. Mix half an ounce of the gargle with an equal volume of methylated spirit, add to this half a drachm of the iron liquor, stir well, and let a drop of the mixture fall upon the blotting paper very near to one of the iron drops, so that the spreading of the liquor in the substance of the paper causes the filtered margin of the drop to come into contact with the iron stain, where it will cause a dark line if the tannin be still in excess. Further additions of iron liquor to the tannin are to be made in the same way, testing after each, and making the additions smaller as the increasing faintness of the dark line of contact indicates that the neutral point is approaching. When the dark line ceases to be produced, count the number of minims of iron solution that have been used. Every sixteen minims used indicates one grain of tannin in the half ounce of gargle operated upon. The gargle tested was found to contain honey also, but that did not interfere with the accuracy of the indications, as was proved by preparing a gargle of the calculated strength, containing honey, and repeating the tannin determination with the same results.—*Pharmaceutical Journal*.

Ammonia Present in Corks.

In a preliminary note published in the *Schweizerische Wochenschrift für Chemie und Pharmacie*, Dr. Paul Liechti states that his suspicions having been aroused by the results of some water analyses which he was engaged on, he determined to examine the new corks with which the containers had been closed. This he did by shaking each cork with 50 ccm. of water in a clean glass bottle provided with a glass stopper, pouring the water off into a tube, and testing it by means of Nessler's reagent. In every case a decided coloration appeared. He examined not only his own corks, which he had himself purchased but a few weeks previously from the manufacturer, but also a number of new corks obtained from local pharmacists and grocers. To avoid handling them, the corks were taken up with pincers to lay in the water. The reaction was not equally marked in each case, but it was always very decided.

In view of this observation Dr. Liechti utters a caution against the use of new corks as stoppers for bottles of water intended for analysis.—*American Druggist*.