

SELECTIONS.

SALICYLATE OF SODA SOLUTIONS.—We have at various times, especially in the Dispensing Notes, called attention to the fact that sodium salicylate solutions (especially in alkaline solution) after a short time develop a red colour. S. Demant points out that a slight excess of salicylic acid keeps the solution perfectly, and in no way interferes with the action. To make a 20-per-cent. solution 400 parts of distilled water are heated to the boiling-point, allowed to cool to 30 degrees C., 100 parts salicylic acid added, and 60 parts bicarbonate of sodium introduced, in small portions, with constant stirring; the solution is filtered through absorbent cotton and diluted with sufficient distilled water to make 600 parts.—[Chemist and Druggist.

SPONGE FISHERY.—The proceeds of the sponge fishery in the Bahamas in 1888 amounted to 49,113*l.*, which is rather more than an average result. It is generally reported, however, that the sponge-beds are becoming rapidly depleted; and this fact renders it impossible to regard the industry as being in a satisfactory condition.

COLORATION OF AROMATIC SPIRIT OF AMMONIA.—Very frequently this preparation darkens to such an extent that the mixture is unsightly when compared with one made by observing all the precautions necessary. The deep colour is almost invariably due to the use of commercial alcohol which has been stored in wooden casks. Mr. H. F. Meier states in the Druggist's Bulletin that, owing to natural competition, sometimes the inside coating of the barrel with a glue solution is slighted, or done imperfectly, so that the wood is exposed to the action of the alcohol. Even small traces of tannin or other astringent matter can be the cause of darkening when brought in contact with either fixed or volatile alkalis. Its presence can be readily detected by evaporating a few ounces of the alcohol, and then testing with ferric chloride, which produces a black stain on the dish. That this is the case can be shown by the addition of ammonia water alone to the alcohol. The remedy for this difficulty lies in the removal of the astringent matter. The alcohol contaminated is treated with a small amount of hydrated oxide of iron, the precipitate from a single fluid drachm of solution of ferric chloride by ammonia being usually sufficient to remove all the tannin from a gallon. This hint is useful to those who make the spirit without distillation. Thus prepared, the spirit seldom remains colourless. The colouration is often attributed to the essential oil not being distilled along with the spirit, but practice has conclusively proved that if the spirit alone is redistilled (and therefore freed from solid matter such as tannin) the aromatic spirit made from it by mixture does not darken.—[Chemist and Druggist.

ISALEON.—This is the name of a new, white, odorless oil which does not rancidify, and evaporates without residue. It is soluble in 7 parts of alcohol, 5 parts of ether, in the same proportions of benzine (petroleum ether), and oil of turpentine. It is soluble in all parts in carbon disulphide and the fatty oils. It is the product of distillation of oleic acid with lime, and finds its greatest usefulness in the perfumery industry.

TAR AS A DEODORIZER OF IODOFORM.—Ehrmann, of Vienna, was the first to note that pomades and dressings of iodoform containing tar had no longer the pungent iodoform odor which to many, indeed the bulk of humanity, is so disagreeable. Negel, of Jassy, has taken the matter up, and now states, in the *Repertoire de Pharmacie*, that a mixture of 5 parts of iodoform with 100 parts of tar has no appreciable odor. For internal administration of iodoform the tar may be used as a pill excipient.

DEXTRIN AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR GUM ARABIC.—A German patent has been granted to A. Schumann for a process of manufacturing dextrin free from sugar as a substitute for gum arabic. Starch is mixed to a thick cream with cold water and treated with 1 per cent. of mineral acid. After twenty-four hours the mixture is washed until free from acid. The starch is again mixed with water to a cream and heated to 160-70° C. by superheated steam until all the starch is converted. This solution is refined and evaporated to dryness.

TO PREVENT BUMPING IN DISTILLATION.—Mr. Stanley E. Parkhill, of Owosso, Mich., suggests a method which he states, in the *Pharmaceutical Era*, quite does away with this most persistent and annoying phenomenon in the distillation of liquids. It consists in roughening the inside of the flask by nascent hydrofluoric acid. A small amount of fluor spar is introduced into the vessel along with sufficient sulphuric acid, and the whole warmed until action begins. In the course of a few minutes the vessel is emptied and thoroughly washed, and is then ready for use.—[National Druggist.

PHENOL CELLULOSE.—Desesquelle recommends in the *Reertoire de Pharmacie* this as a substitute for carbolated collodion in surgical dressings. It is prepared by dissolving gun cotton in campho-phenique. When the solvent evaporates it leaves a thin film of the pyroxylin, which entirely covers and protects the skin. The dressing is a most beautiful and useful one.

According to the *Scientific American* a new process for producing aluminium on a commercial scale by electrolysis is as follows: When a mixture of cryolite and common salt is electrolyzed at a temperature below 1000° aluminium chloride is not formed as the common salt is decomposed. At a higher temperature, however, the sodium chloride is reduced and aluminium deposited on one of the electrodes.

THE TENDENCY OF THE TIMES.—The following is a take off on the tendency of the average doctor to specify proprietary articles:

R—Ol. Morrhuæ (Baker's), f. oz. iii.
 Qi. acacie (Squibb's gran.), oz. i.
 Aqua Lauro Cerasi (Cherish), f. oz. i.
 Syr. Hypop. (Fellows), f. oz. ii.
 Ol. Menth. p. (Hotchkiss), qtt. x.
 Aq. (Jones' filter), q. s. ad f. oz. viii.
 Emulsio in mortar (Wedgewood).
 Put into vial (Whitall T. & Co.)
 Cork (Armstrong).
 Label (Gast Lithogr. Co.)

Dose:—Tablespoon (Mermod, Jace. & Co.) three times a day.

ANUS-MAGNUS, M. D.,
 Phys. of the future.

THE COST OF A PHARMACIST'S MISTAKE.—A few months since, as was at the time related in *The Chemist and Druggist*, an accidental poisoning case occurred at Passy (Paris), whereby M. Dupuy, aged 26, lost his life. The pharmacist, M. Norbert Gaumo, by some unaccountable oversight, dispensed opium pills instead of the quinine prescribed by the physician. He soon discovered his mistake, and tried to correct it, but not in time to save the patient. Last week the pharmacist appeared before the Correctional Tribunal, and was sentenced in three months' imprisonment and 40,000*f.* damages towards the widow Dupuy.

AN AUTOMATIC DOCTORING MACHINE.—It is announced that a Dutch apothecary has taken out a patent for an automatic doctoring machine. We do not look for jests from Holland, especially among the druggists, and indeed the project, as described, is quite feasible. The machine is shaped like a man; but this signifies nothing beyond advertisement. It is divided into compartments, each bearing the label of some disease above the "slit;" a sufferer chooses that which refers to his complaint, drops in his money, and receives a pill, a powder, or a draught, suitable to his case. It is a lovely notion in itself; as good as a gold mine or ever so much better—and a work of philanthropy besides. Myriads of our fellow-creatures who toil through the day, inadequately supported by the prospect of a pill for tea, would find solace and strength renewed at each street corner. The machine would be serviceable to the State also. Human skill has its limits, and with all that unremitting conscientiousness which we gladly acknowledge in the medical profession, doctors cannot reduce our surplus population as an automatic machine would do. That was well exemplified in the case of the guillotine. It may be feared, however, on this very account, that trade jealousies will oppose the introduction of this beneficent contrivance. We hope that the public will put its foot down on the question. There is no greater comfort for the infirm than a pill if administered at the psychological moment; and that moment would occur hourly for thousands if an automatic machine stood within reach.—[Evening Standard.