

The British Pharmacopoeia of 1898 did not standardize the powdered drug. The edition of 1914 fixes this at 1.25 per cent of strychnine, and prescribes the addition of milk sugar to adjust this value, within a limit of accuracy of 0.05 per cent excess or defect.

The total solids are found to vary, in these samples, from 2.25 per cent to 25.26 per cent. These extreme differences do not correspond to the variation in strychnine content; the sample giving only 2.25 per cent of total solids contains 0.95 per cent of strychnine; whilst that giving 25.36 per cent solids, yields but 1.45 per cent of the alkaloid. The pharmacopoeal standard requires 1.50 per cent strychnine. Most of the samples which approximate to this percentage show about 14 to 16 per cent total solids. It appears reasonable to suppose that a normal sample of the crude drug, should, on definite treatment as prescribed by the pharmacopoeia, yield an extract of approximately constant character as regards dissolved solids. This matter requires investigation.

Alcohol of 70 per cent strength is prescribed; and there can be no sufficient reason for a variation in strength of from 36.16 to 74.32 in the finished extract.

I beg to recommend that this subject be more fully investigated in the near future; and that the present report be published as Bulletin No. 342.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. MCGILL,
Chief Analyst.