

them. In other words, many people are practically immune to moderate doses of methyl alcohol. In most cases where small doses are taken, serious intoxication means that there is in the poisoned individual an idiosyncrasy against this agent. It is owing to this fact that in times past many perfectly sincere observers asserted, and interested parties loudly proclaimed, the innocence of methyl alcohol. During the trial of the Baltimore suits against Gilbert & Co. a dramatic incident occurred, based on this belief. A chemist drank a quantity of methylated spirits in open court. Of course, we now know that, although this was a dangerous act, the chances were greatly in favor of the witness, especially if at the time his stomach were full of food, or if he took an emetic shortly after the draught of wood alcohol.

Prof. W. A. Puckner, in the *Western Druggist* for December, 1897, wrote:

"The only constituent of wood alcohol likely to be present in sufficient amount to be poisonous is acetone, and, since methyl alcohol is comparatively free from this, the preparations now in the market are presumably also free from the poisonous properties ascribed to wood alcohol."

Supporting this proposition, he took internally single 30 c.c. doses of a commercial wood alcohol containing about 0.5 per cent. of acetone, and experienced no unpleasant results therefrom.

"Further doses of 15 c.c. taken at intervals of thirty minutes until 90 c.c. had been drunk, left the body temperature normal, at first somewhat accelerating, later slightly depressing, the pulse, *i.e.*, producing the characteristic effects of ethyl alcohol."

On the other hand, Dr. Reid Hunt,* of Johns Hopkins, showed that, in experimenting on dogs, the latter were all killed by doses of Columbian spirits and other fluids containing methyl alcohol, while animals survived the same and larger quantities of ethyl alcohol and pure acetone.

In considering the actual poisonous agent in the methyl alcohol of commerce, one must not forget the secondary organic compounds formed in the intestines and in the blood. It is quite likely that these play an important rôle in the damage inflicted on the system.

Those interested in this subject had better write to Dr. Buller for the address, or read my article in *The Daily Star*, Toronto, which, at length, with notes, deals with this subject, and cites several cases.

*Toxicity of Methyl Alcohol, 1903.