Progress in the Manufacture of Pharmaceutical Preparations.

THE last decade has been signalized by marked progress in therapeutics, in respect both to the discovery of new drugs and to the new application of familiar ones. The pharmaceutical art has kept pace with the science, and has in many cases succeeded in rendering concentrated preparations so palatable that the repugnance of the patient need no longer oppose the application of drugs. Germany is entitled to the credit of being the pioneer in these directions, but it was reserved to American energy and American enterprise to elevate the manufacture of pharmaceuticals to the degree of perfection achieved by the well known firm of Parke, Davis & Co. It is this firm that has ever opposed the constantly increasing patent and proprietary medicine evil and which has insisted that the manufacturer of pharmaceutical preparations should not seek his profit in the secrecy of the formulæ introduced by him, but only in a manner of production which safely permits of the most searching analysis, and open competition.

None of the preparations manufactured by Parke, Davis & Co. are protected by patents. The formulæ are known, and it is only to the uniform excellence of their products that the firm is indebted for their universal recognition by the medical profession. A number of drugs, which have been discovered in part in the laboratory of Parke, Davis & Co., and partly by botanists and chemists in their employ, and have since been made officinal, have thus become common property. We mention only coca erythoxylon, cascara sagrada, Jamaica dogwood, viburnum prunifolium, grindelia robusta, manaca, gelsemium, duboisia, eucalyptus globulus, yerba santa, convallaria majalis, coto, cheken, and pichi.

Also in that field of pharmaceutical industry, in which, in the interests of the medical profession, greater accuracy, elegance, and palatibility are sought for familiar agents, Parke, Davis & Co. have not been backward. Mention is due to their normal liquids, pure, reliable and absolutely uniform fluid extracts; their soluble elastic capsules which facilitate the administration of foul-tasting, disagreeable drugs like quinine, castor oil, copaiba, cubebs, oil of eucalyptus, etc.; their sugar-coated pills; their digestive ferments; their pepsin and pancreatine products; as well as their recently introduced hypodermic tablets. This list, to which we could add all the newly discovered alkaloids and glucosides, is too long for continuation. This firm, which have gained for themselves a world wide reputation for the excellence of the medicinal articles manufactured by them at their main establishment in Detroit, have lately determined to extend their manufacturing business into Canada, and to this end they have erected a large and complete laboratory in Walkerville, Ontario, on the opposite side of the river from their home manufactory. Here they propose to manufacture all the standard medicinal products and fine pharmaceutical specialties for which their Detroit establishment is so famous, and we believe the machinery and apparatus which they have erected for this purpose are of the newest and completest kind. Parke, Davis & Co., whose energy, perseverance and originality have no bounds, have recently placed upon the market preparations of beef that are calculated to fulfill all the requirements for therapeutic and dietic use.

Styrone—A New Antiseptic.

DR. H. H. A. Beach announced to the Boston Society for Medical Observation, in 1879, the antiseptic value of styrone, or a compound of styrax and balsam of Peru, but owing to the cost of production, there was little demand for the drug. Now that it can be prepared at a reasonable figure, it bids fair to enter into competition with other antiseptics, notably those whose odors are objectionable, or that are feared because of their toxicity. The origin of styrone suggests the reason for employment and effectiveness of balsams in ancient, and even modern surgical dressings.

As an antiseptic, Dr. Beach claims for it three important advantages:

1. Efficiency.
2. Non-poisonous character.
3. Agreeable odor.

Surgeons universally admit the desirability of an agent offering adequate protection to wounds, and known to be devoid of toxic properties. A fluidounce administered internally to dogs, produced no unfavorable results. As a deodorizer of foul or offensive wounds or ulcers, particularly those associated with malignant disease or necrosed bone, it is as prompt, effectual and lasting as either of the offensive or poisonous applications in common use. Its odor is not unlike that of cinnamon-water. In ulcerating cancerous growths it may be conveniently sprayed upon parts too sensitive to bear the douching necessary for clearing the surface of decomposing discharges. The following formula has been found useful in such cases, with the addition of morphine as required:

℞ Styrone ..... 1 drm.
Glycerin ..... 1 drm.
Distilled water ..... 1 drm.

"To raw surfaces, pure styrone is somewhat irritating; but in the form of an emulsion with olive oil, water or liquid vaseline, it may be applied freely to open wounds. In the pleural and peritoneal cavities where the greatest opportunity is offered to poisonous antiseptic for absorption, it may be freely used without danger. One part to twelve, with water, is sufficiently strong to disinfect a foul and ulcerating surface. Its action upon the cholera bacillus is so marked that a trial of it in cases of Asiatic cholera is indicated. It may yet corroborate the brilliant discovery of Koch by killing the bacillus with which he explains cholera, and curing the patient. A solution 1·60, with a portion of glycerin added, tastes agreeable and has a gentle stimulating effect upon the mucous membrane of the mouth, not unlike that of ginger syrup."

Dr. Beach further remarks:

"I have known it to give great relief, with diminuition of cough and expectoration, in a number of cases where the patients were subjects of phthsis, no other medicine being used at the time. It may be substituted for carbolic acid in gargles requiring antiseptic action. I have excised the female breast repeatedly, and after tying all vessels, washed out the resulting cavity with styrone and liquid vaselin (1.12), closed the wound with catgut sutures, enveloping the projecting ends of the drainage tubes with a bunch of charpie as large as the fist, which had been saturated with the mixture and squeezed dry, then covering the wound with two layers of sheet-lint saturated with the mixture, overlapping the incision an inch on each side. A layer of borated cotton was afterward applied to maintain an even compression. Upon removal of the dressing at the end of eight or ten days, good union without suppuration was found. No unfavorable effects from its use have been observed in any instance."—*The Medical Age.*

HYDROFLUORIC ACID AS AN ANTIFERMENTATIVE.—That hydrofluoric acid is a powerful antifermentative has long been known, but a practical use of this property has until recently been made only on a small scale. Some years ago an English analyst proposed to preserve specimens of milk, intended for analysis, by adding to them a minute quantity of hydrofluoric acid, which was, indeed, found to be highly efficacious. Effront has now made use of this fact for preventing the development of too large an acid fermentation in mashes from which spirit is to be distilled. It has been found that the formation of lactic acid can thus be either retarded or entirely suppressed, and that of butyric acid is still more energetically resisted. In consequence of this, the alcoholic distillate is found to be much purer and less contaminated with odorous principles, fusel oil, etc.—*Amer. Druggist.*

NEW COLLEGE OF PHARMACY.—S. S. Beman has prepared plans for the new home of the Illinois College of Pharmacy to be erected on Dearborn street, at the corner of Twenty-sixth street. It will consist of four stories and basement, 106 x 100 feet, pressed brick and stone front, gravel roof, hard wood finish, steam heat, electric light, architectural iron work, and the latest appliances. There will be such complete and commodious lecture and recitation rooms, laboratories, museum and library as will render it by far the most thoroughly equipped college of its kind in the country. Cost about $1000,000.

Exactness in little duties is a wonderful source of cheerfulness.