

forgotten. It is well, therefore, to insert, in a special report, matters that would be properly omitted from a paper prepared for a professional audience.

Sanitary problems are of especial interest to the public, but the amount of ignorance, or rather false knowledge, displayed concerning them is surprising and often difficult to combat. The sanitarian is not unfrequently called upon suddenly to defend a position involving complex statistics; and, because the data cannot be forthwith produced, the inference is drawn that his points are really without facts to support them, and that they are consequently not well taken.

Long before he gets into court, particularly if the time for preparation of the case be short, the expert may well "pray to be delivered from his friends." He may receive a peremptory order by telegraph to "determine the mineral qualities of this rock," when the telegram should have read "Assay this ore for silver," and later it may be a matter of surprise that a quantitative knowledge of the copper present was not obtained while passing along the line for the determination of the silver; for it is generally not known that the complete analysis of any thing is quite rare, and correspondingly tedious and expensive.

Toxicologists who hear me may call to mind some case involving a search for the presence of an alkaloid, strychnia for example, during which search the district attorney, in his eagerness for information, may have asked to know what the indications were as to the presence of the poison, at a time when the extraneous organic matter was not nearly removed. He may have wished no final report, but only the simple probabilities, whereon to base a possible arrest. Such requests are very common, and are akin to a demand for a proof of the pudding during the early baking, when we all know that

such proof comes at a much later stage of the proceedings.

Finally, "When doctors disagree, who shall decide?"

This question is often very vigorously settled by the jury, as was instanced in a recent celebrated murder trial in New York city. In that case what the experts had to say on either side was simply thrown overboard as a whole, and the finding was based upon the testimony of the remaining witnesses.

What can be said upon this question of the disagreement of expert witnesses? First, it must be noted, they are far from being the only class of people who fail to agree, and that, too, on very important subjects. Do my hearers think it would be a very difficult task to find a small army of men who would testify very variously and very positively upon questions of politics or religion? Would it be hard to find "good men and true" who would give under oath greatly differing opinions concerning the propriety of instituting free trade or establishing an inheritance tax? Experts are subject to the same errors of judgment as befall the rest of professional humanity, and when their opinions clash, they are entitled to the same respect that we grant to the members of the bench when they hand down the decision of a divided court.

One fruitful opportunity for disagreement always arises when questions are brought into court touching upon matters newly discovered and apart from the well-beaten path of common professional knowledge. Doubt is often left upon the minds of those seeking the light, even when the testimony is given by the specialist who originally developed the new point in question, for one cannot be expected to be thoroughly educated in that which he has himself but recently discovered.

Many of us have dreaded to see the "ptomaines," or putrefactive alkaloids, make their way into court