

done by treating 1,000 grains, for example, of pulverized pepper with alcohol of specific gravity, 0.83. until they are exhausted. The solution is then distilled to the consistence of an extract, the extract so obtained is then mixed with a solution of caustic potash, which dissolves the resin, and leaves a green powder which should be first washed with water, and then dissolved in alcohol of specific gravity 0.833. By spontaneous evaporation, the solution yields quadrilateral transparent obliquely truncated crystals of piperine, which are tasteless and inodorous, insoluble in cold water, and sparingly soluble in boiling water, from which they separate on cooling; soluble in alcohol, especially with the help of heat: the alcoholic pepper yields about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of piperine, and of course, if the article be adulterated, the reduced proportion of the piperine obtained, may serve to indicate the quality of the pepper, or the extent of the fraud.

*To detect imitation Pepper, or P. D., when made of mustard, &c.*—Throw a certain quantity of the suspected pepper into tepid water; the genuine pepper remains solid, and retains its spherical shape, whilst the spurious grains swell out, soon become soft and gluey, and on stirring becomes disintegrated, and fall into powder.

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## THE RETIRED MERCHANT.

There is a period for which most men look—for retirement from the cares and labour of life; it is an indefinite period, but is expected by nearly all to be reached sooner or later. The farmer expects to leave the plow, the mechanic his work-shop, the author his labors in the field of letters, the physician his practice, the lawyer his profession, the artist his studio, and the merchant his counting-room: all intend to go into retirement. The farmer, perhaps, intends to live at ease on his old homestead, lie in the shade of trees of his own planting, and wander over fields which his own industry has subdued; the mechanic, the author, the physician, the lawyer, the artist, and the merchant, have each their favourite phantom, and each has constructed an "air-castle" according to his peculiar taste, where he proposes to spend the last years of his life in the enjoyment of undisturbed pleasure. But, as the merchant, from the precarious nature of his employment, indulges most deeply in these anticipations, we propose to follow him in his retirement, and make him a type of the whole. He, like his predecessors, time out of mind, will occupy his new mansion on the avenue! He has been years planning and building it, and it is finished at last, and ready to occupy; his "air-castle" is finally made to take a substantial form.

It is a massive edifice; ships have sailed to and fro to gather the materials used in its construction and embellishment; artists of rare skill have been em-