

Pharmacy in England.

Probable Re-election of President Hills—The Manager of the Iodine Convention Gets \$5,000—How the Iodine Ring is Held Together—London Chamber of Commerce—Chemists' Exhibition of 1897—Aluminium in Surgical Instruments—The Obliging Druggist and the Dose.
(From Our Own Correspondent.)

That Mr. Walter Hills has proved an admirable president and fitting successor to the perennial Mr. Carteighe in the chief place at the council of the Pharmaceutical Society is admitted on every side. His speeches have been models both in their modesty and brevity, and he has won golden opinions for his painstaking work on the council. There can be little doubt, therefore, that he will be re-elected next April, especially as Mr. Carteighe is withdrawing somewhat from London and spending more of his time at his country residence near Reading. Some curious developments regarding the *Pharmaceutical Journal* may also be expected about the same time, and it will be interesting to see how the council propose to live within their income. Fortunately, the rush of the great unqualified still continues, so that examination fees seem to go on piling up in the society's exchequer. Another feature about the examinations is the great increase in the number of failures, and this is now found both in the major and minor alike. There can be little doubt that this is mainly due to the professors on the board of examiners, who often seem seized with a "plucking" fit, and are rather apt to examine upon their various scientific subjects as if the candidate were receiving a degree in the particular science. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon such examiners that pharmacy is a practical science, and that no amount of theory will make a practical pharmacist. Medical men complain that their modern system is turning out men with the highest diplomas and an absolute ignorance of the art of prescribing an effective cough mixture. Veterinary surgeons complain that their qualified assistants have no knowledge of posology, and pharmacists assert that the minor man too often is unable to spread a plaster or silver a pill.

When the history of the iodine convention comes to be written it will make interesting reading. Few are aware of the trials through which it has passed or how much is due to the organizing spirits that control the arrangements. Some few years ago I knew a German chemical manufacturer who was outside the convention and did uncommonly well. His language against the monopoly was both loud and free, and his reasons for objecting to it were chiefly his own high principles. He paid a visit to England and the convention got him, and he is now an insider, and doing better than before. What the members of the convention think of Mr. Rottenburg, the managing director of one of the large Scottish works, was clearly shown only a little while ago. Mr. Rottenburg is practically the organizing manager of the convention, whose

duty it is to see that all iodine manufacturers are kept together, and external competitive sources are kept out. In consequence of some iodine filtering on to the market below the convention rates, the origin of which was stated to be Japanese, Mr. Rottenburg came in for some strictures. But at the next meeting of the convention Mr. David Howard put matters straight by proposing a gift of \$5,000 to the genial manager as a tribute to his organizing ability and a mark of confidence. Not a word was raised against the proposal, and Mr. Rottenburg entertained his generous friends at a luncheon at the Savoy. When later on each member was called upon for \$350 as his share of the gift, some of them appeared in hardly so gracious a humor. But this is some indication of what the convention has done for those within its pale in maintaining an artificially inflated market for quite a number of years. It is said that iodine would pay well at 4 cents an ounce: no one can buy it much under 18 cents.

Quite recently the Scottish Acid and Alkali Company have started manufacturing iodine and iodides, and have announced that they are outside the convention. The difference in their favor is only about 5 per cent., so that, so far, they have made no great impression on the market or disturbed the serenity of the convention. The fact is that the disturbing element during the past year or two is not connected with this or that firm selling under rates, but the large amount of stock that the conventioners have been forced to accumulate. It is roughly estimated that this exceeds three or four years' supply for the whole world. Nothing would prevent the collapse of the convention to-morrow, in these circumstances, except the conviction that even if the price was reduced to one-fourth of what it is at present nothing like four times the quantity now sold could be disposed of at the reduced figure. So that neither producer, agent, wholesaler, nor retailer is interested in reducing the price to any material extent.

The London Chamber of Commerce has always been favorably noted for the admirable manner in which its proceedings are managed. Without too much ostentation it manages to produce a solid amount of good work that is highly appreciated by its members and recognized by the government. If it is not more powerful to-day it is the fault of the jealousy too often exhibited by members of the same trade that prevents them combining for their general good. The judicious system of dividing up the trades into various sections has led to greater interest being taken in matters affecting particular industries, and tangible results have followed the ventilation of grievances. The latest departure is that of inaugurating monthly dinners, when the members meet together and enjoy conviviality, followed by a discussion on one of the burning questions of the day. The

second monthly dinner will take place on February 2nd at the Trocadero Restaurant, and Sir Vincent H. Kennett-Barrington, M.A., LL.M., will take the chair. Sir Vincent is the chairman of the South and Central American trade section of the chamber. The subject for discussion is our old friend, "Imperial Federation and Naval Defence." The subject for discussion at the March dinner will be "Technical and Commercial Education."

Our junior pharmaceutical journal, *The British and Colonial Druggist*, is already announcing the Chemists' Exhibition of 1897, to take place in August next at Covent Garden Theatre. The unqualified success that attended the exhibition of last year rendered it imperative that a larger place should be secured, and the lessees of the theatre have promised that special decorations and fittings will be made that should render the show even more popular and attractive than the last. Of recent years the old country, that first started exhibitions into popular favor, has seemed to lag behind, but it is satisfactory to record that, whilst Boston's pharmacy fair proved a failure, the London chemists' exhibition has each year grown in size and importance. The enterprise of the journal running the same is widely recognized and receiving its due reward.

Those chemists who handle any surgical instruments for medical men and nurses will be interested to learn that aluminium is not turning out so satisfactorily as a substitute for steel in these articles as was generally anticipated. It appears that although in appearance there is nothing to be said against the aluminium handles, the peculiar softness and absorbent nature of the metal is very detrimental. It seems to exude any trace of oil that may have touched it and shows peculiar spots and marks in a very short time. With antiseptics such as perchloride of mercury it is most unsatisfactory, as it has a tendency to start a sort of miniature aluminium tree growing on the surface that rubs off and soon renders the goods unsightly. Makers of instruments also say that the practice of oiling surgical instruments with olive oil is not advisable even to preserve them from rust, as owing to the frequent adulteration of the olive oil with other oils experience has shown that it marks the metal. Pure olive oil is unobjectionable, but vaseline answers as well. In these days of nickel-plating, when a very thin coat of nickel is placed upon the steel without any other metal, the instruments are practically untarnishable. But it should be borne in mind that it is only possible to put a very thin layer of nickel on, whilst electro-plating can be done to any extent, as it is placed upon a thin layer of copper.

The following is from a recent issue of the *British and Colonial Druggist* and is distinctly good:

The other day a sweet young thing, composed principally of hair and emotion, entered a chemist's shop in Hull. "Can you give me half an ounce of castor oil in