

Quebec Notes.

Quite a ripple of excitement is going the round in Quebec City. The druggists are highly incensed at the way the wholesale houses are treating the trade in that city. The traveller of an American firm is being "waited for," and will receive a hot reception. It appears that a Quebec photographer, who has made some money, decided to make use of it in the drug business, and, being satisfied with a five-per-cent. turnover, sells his goods just above cost. For instance, he gives Hood's Sarsaparilla for 75c. per bottle, Wampole's Cod Liver Oil for 67c. He will not put up a prescription, but is so obliging to the public that he tells the prescription owner what the cost of the ingredients is, and so sets the people against the druggists. The wholesale trade, of course, deny supplying this cutter, but there is no use in trying to cloak their actions. This is the way they now get around this kind of business:—A wholesale firm can have its headquarters in Montreal and a branch at Toronto. Mr. Eaton may come to Montreal and purchases his goods there in very large quantities and retail them at cut rates in Toronto; and Mr. Livernois places his orders with the Toronto branch and undersells the patrons of the Montreal house. At the end of the year the members of the Montreal and Toronto house meet and pocket the dividends. A Detroit house lately signed a contract with Livernois, the Quebec photographer, who now sells some of their preparations at less than list prices. The Quebec druggists very naturally object to this kind of business and will not purchase goods of the Detroit house, much to its chagrin. A Montreal house, luckily, did not supply the Quebec photographer, and reaped quite a harvest in Quebec City this fall, as most of the druggists placed large orders with this firm.

This Quebec cutting question has aroused most of the druggists in this province, and it is very likely that the firms who will cater to the consumers, country doctors, merchants, and cutters will, in the long run, lose a good paying part of their trade.

Castoreum is getting more and more scarce in Montreal and Quebec. One of the reasons is that the beaver is becoming a rare animal. But the greatest cause of this dearth in the trade is the Hudson Bay Co., who buy up all they can and ship it to England, refusing to sell an ounce of it in Canada.

The Montreal College of Pharmacy is in full swing and is doing good work. The Quebec Association lately granted a license to an Austrian druggist, who had first to produce certificates showing he had studied chemistry, pharmacy, botany, etc., etc., during two college terms, equalling our curriculum; had passed his examinations at same, and was in possession of his diploma. Another gentleman, who matriculated in English, French, Latin, geo-

graphy, history, arithmetic, etc., at the Edinburgh University, was, on the strength of his university certificate, placed on the register as an apprentice, and will have to pass his minor and major examinations after following two courses of lectures at our College of Pharmacy. So much for the high standing of the diplomas of the Pharmaceutical Association of the Province of Quebec.

Spruce gum is beginning to show itself on our local markets and realizes good prices. Very little of the best quality is met with though.

It appears very little Canada balsam was gathered last season. Some say it is owing to the small figure offered by wholesale men when the balsam gatherers made inquiries as to the probable figure of the drug, and they were discouraged at the poor prospect. Very few druggists sell poison to unknown persons, but cyanide of potassium, etc., can be obtained without legal restraint from photographers and wholesalers.

Notes from England.

(From our own Correspondent.)

It is quite evident that the latest development of scientific pharmacy is toward a more thorough knowledge of the histological characters of drugs. It has long been a reproach against us in England that whilst we investigated the chemical constituents of new drugs with almost feverish haste, we completely neglected a detailed microscopical examination which alone could ensure the recognition of the drug with certainty. The new professor of the Pharmaceutical Society has entered the subject with enthusiasm, and although no particularly brilliant results are yet recorded, a foundation for more systematic work has been laid. Personally, I am not one of those who believe that it is possible to recognize adulterations of powdered drugs, for instance, by microscopical examination. Of course, certain gross adulterations can always be easily detected, such as the addition of starches or other well marked bodies. It is quite certain that our knowledge of the microscopical appearance and histological characters of drugs must be vastly increased before we can identify adulterations by this method, even when the drug is whole and not powdered. Professor Greenish was able to state that certain leaves were clearly not what they were represented to be, and his diagnosis was amply confirmed by the microscopical examination, but he was not definitely able to state what they really were. At the School of Pharmacy the use of the microscope is being taught, with special reference to the identification of drugs, and the wide field which lies open will probably soon have many English workers therein. Journals of pharmacy can do much to assist this desirable work by reproducing as often as possible illustrations of the microscopical appearance of drugs, concerning which papers may be written. It is a serious

drawback to students at the present time that most of the works on materia medica are absolutely devoid of these illustrations, and that such a leading volume as Hanbury and Pluckiger's "Pharmacographia" was published without illustrations has long been recognized as a palpable error.

Pharmacists would do well to cultivate a thorough knowledge of microscopy. Chemistry, botany and microscopy are taught in medical schools in such an elementary fashion that few medical men are really expert at all in these subjects. It is here that the pharmacist's superior training should ensure that analyses and examinations requiring care and skill should be left in his hands by the physician. Urine analysis is exactly one of those subjects. Most doctors keep and apply tests for sugar, albumin, etc., none of which are infallible and which often require supplementing before a safe opinion can be expressed. Many druggists are in the habit of performing these examinations for doctors without fee. They meet with this reward, however, in the increased confidence and esteem of the medical practitioner and his valuable recommendation to his client.

The marvellous spread of photography as a scientific hobby of multitudes of amateurs has rendered it a lucrative adjunct to the chemists' business. There are few "profitable extras" that pay so well and are so easily handled as photographic goods. A good stock can be stored in a small space, whilst if only a corner of the window be spared and a large and striking photograph displayed, a fair amount of business usually follows. Many of the leading camera makers will supply a photo for exhibiting purposes. The Eastman Company, with their celebrated "Kodak," have made immense strides in this country, whilst the Thornton-Pickard Co., with their instantaneous shutters, are becoming known all over the world. The particular plates of certain firms, such as the Ilford, Blackfriars, etc., have their constant adherents, and it is surprising how amateurs stick to the same kind and decline to try new ones. The business in photographic chemicals falls very properly into chemists' hands, since many of them are poisons. From experience of the success of photographic goods as an adjunct to pharmacy in this country, I feel sure there is a big future in store and those who start first will reap the benefits.

The long-expected action, started by the manufacturers of Lanoline against Messrs. Richardson & Co., of Leicester, Eng., has just commenced. Over a year ago I acquainted your readers with the fact that the German manufacturers, through Messrs. Burroughes, Wellcome & Co., their English agents, has set the law in motion to restrain the Leicester firm from imitating (as they averred) their patented article. Unfortunately the result of the trial will not be known before the mail leaves, but it bids fair to become a pharmaceutical *cause celebre*.