

Notes on Chemical Drugs and Chemicals.

FROM A REPORT OF MESSRS. GEHE & CO.,
DRESDEN.

Bismuthum salicylicum basicum.—This preparation has secured for itself a permanent place in therapeutics and is eagerly sought after, so that sometimes we have not been able to manufacture it fast enough. Of course, the price affected by sharp competition is already so depressed that only transactions on a large scale ensure a moderate profit. For the rest it should not excite surprise if, from the surgeon's point of view, the idea of using this salt also as a substitute for iodoform were to take root.

Bromum.—The agreement existing between the National Bromine Company in Philadelphia and the United German Bromine producers is at an end. According to this the Americans were not to offer or sell bromine or bromides on the European market, while the same restriction was laid upon the German producers with respect to America. In consequence of want of unanimity among the members, the American union was dissolved, and the latter, in despite of the treaty, offered bromine and bromides in Europe. It is said that 10,000 lbs. of bromine have been already shipped to France.

Under such circumstances reprisals on the part of the German producers, which have so far made themselves evident in a reduction of prices of bromine to the extent of 20 per cent., could not fail to obtain. A further reduction still is in no way unlikely, as when two powerful parties begin to underbid one another the end of the rivalry is not easily foreseen.

Although therefore the value of bromine has already fallen 20 per cent., no alteration in the preparations of that element, bromide of potassium and other salts, has yet taken place in Germany, because in reference to the sale of their preparations there exists here a special combination of producers that for the present is not inclined to take any notice of the altered conditions. How long it will be able to maintain this attitude is of course another question, and will depend upon whether the price of bromine in America undergoes a further reduction or not. As a matter of fact, bromide of potassium and other salts, on the basis of the present prices of bromine in America, are offered at lower figures than the German goods, although in this respect it must be remembered that the American product on account of its content of chlorides (5 to 6 per cent.) does not correspond to the requirements of the Pharmacopœia.

Chloroformum.—In consequence of competition at home and abroad prices have recently been reduced by the United German manufacturers, and now approximate to their earliest lowest level, which in spite of the cheaper prices of chlorinated lime and spirit which then ruled, was regarded as insufficient to enable the production to pay.

The chloroform purified by Pietet's freezing-out process has just appeared in commerce, and the answer to the question whether it will realize the hopes cherished with regard to its action may be therefore soon expected. The removal of higher chlorinated compounds, the presence of which is quite conceivable, appears to be effected at -70°C ., whilst the chloroform itself only solidified under -100°C . According to our experience the chloroform so purified is diluted to the official specific gravity of 1.487 with alcohol. This proceeding almost points to the conclusion that unsatisfactory observations have been already made as to the stability of the product, otherwise a body so carefully purified would scarcely be subjected to the risk of contamination anew by the addition of alcohol. At any rate a professional judgment will be of more service here also than the sanguine and confident prediction so generally affected, which only too often gives hopes and desires the precedence of actual discoveries. Whether the very high price of the improved preparation is counterbalanced by the advantages of its application can only be determined after a long period of observations carried out by chemists and therapeutists in co-operation.

Crocinum.—The employment of this remedy is constantly increasing, and extends principally in the domain of veterinary medicine, where it continually grows in favor for the treatment of itch and other diseases of a parasitic nature.

Duboisinum.—This alkaloid, well nigh forgotten medicinally, has been newly recommended as a prompt sedative in psychoses associated with conditions of excitement. It is said to be preferable to hyoscyne in its freedom from danger, and is subcutaneously used as sulphate in doses of $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{32}$ grain.

Iodopyrine.—This new iodine derivative of antipyrin has not yet passed the experimental stage of its existence. As an interesting fact, we may mention that patent rights have been applied for in re its application to engraving upon metal instead of the corrosive substances generally employed.

Lanolinum.—A patent has been recently granted for the preparation of a sulphurated lanoline by heating the latter with 20 per cent. of flowers of sulphur. Primarily it is intended to employ the new product in the production of medicinal soaps. If, as may be assumed, the sulphur be contained therein in a readily absorbed form, its medicinal use may perhaps develop to a far greater extent, similarly to that of ichthyol, which is also due to the sulphur it contains.

Morphinum.—The fate of the new opium harvest is so far not definitely decided, but all signs indicate that it will furnish an abundant yield. One can scarcely go far wrong in estimating the total result at 8,000 cases, while during the past year only about 6,000 cases were harvested. Besides this new yield about 2,000 cases of old stock must be added,

which are to be found in second and third hands in Smyrna, Constantinople and Salonica, so that the new season will open with about 10,000 cases. In the opium market it has not been possible to overlook the significance of these facts and desires, which indeed have found expression in a reduction of prices.

Important transactions have been closed at these reduced prices, after which, however, the market became firm again. Most sellers have withdrawn their offers and prefer to temporise; because they are of opinion that the crops may have been over-estimated, and that, even in the most favourable cases, all good chances have been discounted by the existent condition of the market.

With reference to the Morphine prices no definite opinion can so far be formed. Thanks to a strong demand for morphine, manufacturers have been able for some time to isolate themselves from the depressing influence of the Smyrna opium market, and to maintain higher claims; later, however, they have been obliged to take the altered conditions into consideration. The newly acquired firmness in the opium market has, of course, not failed to exert a corresponding effect here also. The value of morphine has increased, and the manufacturers stand by that position, because they do not much like to run the risk of the material for later deliveries being dearer.

Podophyllotoxinum.—Our knowledge of the constituents of podophyllum rhizome has been considerably increased by the interesting work of Kuersten. We doubt, however, whether the crystallised podophyllotoxin discovered by him will be successfully introduced as a medicinal agent, as principally the official podophyllin is ordered, and even the podophyllotoxin "Podwyssotzki" hitherto used has found its chief consumers in the department of patent medicine manufacture.

Resorcinum.—The medicinal use of this dioxybenzol is still on the increase, and its use has during the past year undergone a considerable development. With reference to its testing, according to the German Pharmacopœia, we have to remark that so far no resorcin has come under our notice which reacted neutral in solution; a feeble acid reaction has been always perceptible, and consequently this requirement of the "Arzneibuch" does not appear to be at present capable of being met.

From the section on

SIMPLE DRUGS,

with which the report opens, the following abstracts are worthy of reproduction.

Aloes.—The three centres of production, or rather of export of aloes, yield annually, on the average, about the following quantities:

Bombay	50,000 kilo.
South Africa (Cape Town)	300,000 "
Curaçao and Barbadoes	170,000 "

The Bombay aloes are principally derived from the *Aloe parryi*, a wide spread plant on the chalk plateaux of Socotra which yields the Socotra aloes of com-