

## On the Dispensing of Powders for Prescriptions.

BY THOS. S. WIEGAND.

In some of the recent issues of the drug journals the dispensing of medicines in powders has been made a subject of remark. While this form of exhibiting medicines is one of the simplest, it will be admitted that as frequently done, even in stores of good reputation, there is a great deal of inaccuracy in the performance. In the preparation of the materials which, when compounded, form the remedy, the exact and thorough mixture of all the compounds frequently is not effected. Where morphine, arsenious acid, or corrosive sublimate are ordered, the division of any of these is secured by the use of a triturate of the active remedy with sugar of milk, using eight grains of the triturate to represent one grain of the remedy, these triturates are frequently kept on hand, thus making the diffusion eight times more certain.

The order in which the materials are put into the mortar is quite important, and the kind of mortar used is also to be regarded; a close-grained porcelain mortar, free from any uneven places, or little flaws or holes, should always be selected for the purpose.

A small portion of sugar of milk or the mildest ingredient is triturated in the mortar to prevent the active ingredient from adhering to the surface; after this the most active remedy is added and rubbed with that already in the mortar until thoroughly mixed, when the other active ingredients are to be added, each being well mixed with the others; and, lastly, the remainder of the least active material is added and thoroughly mixed.

The proper division of the powder into the number of papers directed is next to be accomplished. Very ingenious apparatus have been made to effect this purpose, but as yet few have been sold so far as my experience extends. The commonest way for dividing and the least reliable is to guess at it by taking out on the end of the spatula about as much as the operator thinks will make the proper quantity for one paper, and having distributed the whole quantity into the number of papers ordered, those which seem to be either too light or too heavy are corrected; this it need only be said is guessing about the division.

Another and much better method is to spread the powder to be divided upon a ground-glass plate, arrange it into a parallelogram of even thickness, and mark off the number of parts into which it should be divided with a straight-edge spatula across the plate. Those who practice this method succeed in making divisions that are with a fraction of a grain. Greater accuracy can be attained by using a glass slab to the under side of which has been pasted a piece of

letter paper upon which have been ruled six or eight parallel lines; at right angles to these an equal number of lines have also been ruled, all at equal distances; at the margins of the paper the numbers 1, 2, 3, etc., are made between the lines so that any given number can be made by multiplying one number by any other that will give the desired number of powders. When odd numbers, such as 13, 17 or 19 are ordered, the best plan is to weigh off the 13th, 17th or 19th of the whole weight and then the remainder will be very readily divided in the manner above described. For those who prefer a more finished affair than that just described, the glass slab should have the edges beveled, and the lines etched on it, the figures being engraved on the beveled edge.—Am. Journal of Pharm.

### New Use for I. R. Nipples.

A new use for the nipple other than a means of conveyance of liquid to the greedy maw of the infant is here suggested. In an admirable classic contributed to the literature of Pharmacy many years ago by Mr. Henry Birot, of Chicago, we believe many uses for this little rubber contrivance other than that for which it was primarily intended were mentioned. Following this distinguished lead, no hesitancy is felt in laying this humble offering before the pharmaceutical world for consideration.

It is well known that the corks used to stopper bottles containing certain liquids have an invincible tendency to leave the neck of the vial; of these, those bottles containing castor oil afford a good example. Simply drawing an ordinary tapering nipple over the cork and down the neck of the vial will prevent this. Of course it is not expected that every ten cent bottle of oil is to be thus provided, but those dirty bottles which have such a chronic tendency to reappear for filling on Saturday night might be thus treated. True, the enterprising druggist might use the nipple in lieu of a chromo and advertise the means of inducing peristalsis, where peristalsis was tardy, and a handsome and useful article thrown in—all for ten cents.

A more extended and satisfactory use of the nipple, however, is afforded those who handle acids largely. Here, there would be no necessity for resorting to the vile smelling paste of flaxseed and plaster of Paris, tied over with a piece of bladder to secure the glass stopper. A well inserted glass stopper, treated with a nipple as indicated would for ordinary purposes be amply sufficient, especially if care be taken to select one that tightly clasped the neck of the bottle and for the larger sized vessels a finger cot would suffice. For security of transit by freight some might consider it necessary to tie around the base of the nipple or cot with string.

Perhaps the most satisfactory use of the nipple as an adjunct to pharmacy and medicine, is as a capper for bottles containing offensively odorous articles, as iodoform and the like. To the physician is this use of the nipple especially serviceable, for it enables him to carry around with him in his instrument bag, carbolic acid, iodoform, tincture iodine and the other indispensable to practice—substances contained in bottles, the corks of which apparently seem endowed with a determination to drop out and spill their contents over bandages and instruments, to the great detriment of the latter.—Rocky Mountain Druggist.

### Some Suggestions for Salesmen.

Good salesmen do not give a thought to personal appearance in busy moments.

One of the best salesmen says the seller should only talk enough to keep the buyer talking.

The best salesman of the future will not be ignorant or illiterate—the day for such has gone by.

It is certainly true that salesmen of ready and fluent speech, good talkers, are often surpassed by those who say little.

There is a maxim, "When you buy, keep one eye on the goods and the other on the seller. When you sell keep both eyes on the buyer."

Some purchasers are as fond of talking as the man who talked to himself when there was no one else to listen, and gave as a reason that he "liked to talk to a good man, and liked to hear a good man talk."

Salesmen who are good listeners are usually good observers, and consequently they grow intelligent. If a point can be made clear at all it is all the clearer by brevity, and sensible people prefer evidence to eloquence.

One of the best faculties of speech for a salesman as it is for any person who has to convince others, is that of a short, plain and pithy illustration. It strikes home. Long-winded stories are tedious, and so are hobbies.

The salesman speaks to explain, convince and persuade, and he should keep his final aim constantly in mind. He knows instantly the effect he is producing, and the more favorable it is the better he can talk, because his facilities are encouraged.

Salesmen are the most important of all young clerks, says a well known merchant. A good one will always increase your business, add to your profits, and be of the same service as a partner would have been. A poor salesman will drive away trade, and may ruin your prospects. Let "fancy" men severely alone. Avoid all "loud" fellows.

The salesman who thinks of the meaning and feels the power of a word when he uses it will naturally speak it earnestly and with the right emphasis. Otherwise he will not emphasize it at all, and it is possible that a sale may hang upon the emphasis given to a few important words.—Michigan Tradesman.