

and can undergo no further change from similar influences.

Not content with ravaging the pharmacist's stock, this helligrent element exhibits a remarkable propensity, in the presence of moisture, for rusting his spatulas and other metallic utensils.

Serious pecuniary loss by evaporation of volatile solids like camphor results from exposure of these substances in ordinary open wooden drawers. Menthol is extremely volatile, and should, therefore, be kept in securely corked bottles to prevent loss. Exposed to the air, carbonate of ammonium partially volatilizes, becomes opaque, and crumbles into a white powder. Iodine is most advantageously kept in securely closed glass receptacles, most ordinary wares are liable to be attacked or permeated by it. Chloral evaporates slowly when exposed to dry atmosphere. Powdered drugs which depend upon volatile constituents for medicinal virtue, like cinnamon, cloves, orris root, and valerian, should, so far as practicable, be kept in bottles, or some other comparatively air-tight container.

Stronger water of ammonia should be kept in strong, glass-stoppered bottles, which should be stored in a cool place and opened with extreme care. When warm, the liberated gas frequently forces the stopper out with considerable violence, and many accidents resulting in injury to the sight of operators are on record.

Pressed roots and herbs are more convenient to handle, occupy less space, and are better preserved than crude drugs in bulk form. Furthermore, the danger of error is materially reduced by handling neatly pressed, wrapped, and labelled packages.

Examine your stock of dandelion and rhubarb roots occasionally to be sure that purchasers do not find worms in them and form unfavorable impressions of you and your business methods.

Cantharides should be thoroughly dried and kept in securely closed containers. The vapor of chloroform quickly kills insects which infest cantharides, and their destruction can be accomplished by placing a small quantity of chloroform in a wide-mouth bottle, or other open vessel, upon the surface of the infested drug and securely closing the container. The heavy chloroform vapor will then gradually sink through the drug and destroy the insects.

The modern method of marketing chlorinated lime in hermetically sealed parcels is not only a source of convenience, but affords protection which serves to prevent loss of the loosely combined chlorine upon which the value of the preparation as a disinfectant is almost entirely dependent. The disagreeable odor of chlorine which clings to the hands of the operator is also avoided.

Charcoal is used in medicine chiefly for its absorbent and disinfectant properties. Owing to its absorbent powers, it should not be unnecessarily exposed to the atmosphere of a laboratory or pharmacy, lest it be thus rendered unfit for medicinal purposes.

Fine sponges should be kept in a closed show-case or drawer. Carriage and slate sponges, which are frequently allowed to become soiled and lend an untidy appearance to the store by rolling about in a window or on the floor, can be conveniently kept assorted and conspicuously displayed in the wire basket with separate compartments for different sizes.

Oxalic acid should not be kept in paper parcels, since it soon renders the paper fragile, and in being thus scattered about may, by admixture with other drugs, cause loss of life. Owing to its external resemblance to Epsom salt, and its very poisonous nature, the substances should not be kept in similar drawers. The practice of keeping them in containers of different style and safely remote from each other is less likely to lead to accidental confusion.

Remember that heated atmosphere usually accumulates near the ceiling, and preparations subject to injury by exposure to elevated temperature should not be kept on upper shelves. Several cases are on record wherein chlorinated lime, which is known to greedily absorb water and carbonic acid from a humid atmosphere, was put up in securely corked and sealed bottles, which were then placed upon an upper shelf until the heat of summer, or a very warm apartment, had liberated sufficient gas to cause a startling explosion, sometimes followed rapidly by a succession of similar ones and a cloud of dust.

Lard ointments, cerates, and in fact nearly all animal fats, are liable to grow rancid by prolonged exposure to air, this change in many cases being accelerated by heat and light. Every precaution should, of course, be taken to avoid such decomposition; but when rancidity is apparent, preparations should never be dispensed, for, instead of having the mild demulcent properties which constitute their chief value, they become irritant and entirely unfit to serve as vehicles for medicinal substances to be applied to the skin. Ointment jars should invariably be thoroughly cleaned and freed from rancidity before refilling with fresh stock.

With ordinary drug-store arrangement it is scarcely practicable to entirely protect tinctures and fluid extracts from injurious effects of air, light, and changes of temperature, but any provision which tends to prevent precipitation from these causes is commendable. The stock of tinctures should be placed in charge of one capable employé who should be held responsible for its condition. Haste is apt to make serious inroads upon accuracy in preparing pharmaceuticals.

The danger from leaving bottles insecurely corked is apparent when we consider that, if a fluid extract prepared from a menstruum composed of diluted alcohol be exposed to the air in an open vessel, the alcohol will evaporate much more rapidly than the water. By this change of character in the menstruum, certain resinous constituents of the drug frequently become insoluble and are

deposited, rendering the fluid more or less turbid, and materially lessening its medicinal value. Collodion loses ether by evaporation, and becomes comparatively worthless.

The deterioration which can occur in a singledrug store from causes indicated here command the constant attention of the manager, and much greater is the problem which confronts the wholesale manufacturer, who must prepare a great variety of products in large quantities, to be distributed in the market in all directions, where they are expected to remain unchanged through the extreme variations in temperature which characterize the severe winters in the north, and the torrid summers in the south; and no less injurious is the improper exposure to which pharmaceuticals are frequently subjected in temperate climates.—*Bulletin of Pharmacy.*

To Hide the Taste of Chloral.

Dr. E. Holland calls attention to the fact that the taste of chloral hydrate is effectively masked by lemonade. Two or three drachms of the syrup should be placed in a tumbler with about 2 ounces of water. If to this is added about 2 ounces or so of gaseous (bottled) lemonade, the mixture may be drunk at leisure, and the soporific action of the drug is in no way impaired.—*Medical Bulletin.*

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