The Preparation of Certain Pills.

The *Bulletin du Syndicat des Pharmaciens du Departement du Nord* publishes the following concerning the preparation of pills of some refractory substances, which we translate entire:

For pills of calomel manna is an excellent excipient, but the following gives an equally excellent mass:

Calomel..... 18 grs.
Tragacanth in powder ..... 2 "
Confection of rose, q. s.

Make into a mass, and divide into twelve pills.

Camphor prescribed in pilular form, either alone or with ammonium carbonate often puzzles beginners. The best method of procedure is as follows: Pulverize the camphor very finely with the aid of alcohol, and make a mass at once with glycerin and tragacanth. This answers for pills of camphor alone, or camphor and ammonium carbonate.

Corrosive sublimate, when prescribed in pills, should be pulverized very finely with two or three times its volume of milk sugar. When combined with other ingredients the latter should be added little by little. According to some authorities, sublimate and similar remedies should never be prescribed in pilular form, but given in solution. This is an application of the maxim of the old chemists, "*Corpora non agunt nisi soluta.*"

Extract of cascara sagrada is made into a good mass with licorice and tragacanth. These pills should always be coated if it is desired that they should preserve their shape.

For carbolic acid the excipients usually employed are wheat flour, soap powder, powdered tragacanth, and glycerin, marsh mallow and glycerin, etc. The choice depends largely upon the nature of the mass, as will be seen by the following examples:

Take of

Subnitrate of bismuth ..... gr. xviii.
Carbolic acid..... gr. j.

Mix, and make one pill.

To make a good mass proceed as follows: Add a half grain of soap to the phenol, mix with the bismuth, and add a few drops of glycerin and some powdered tragacanth:

Take of

Podophyllin ..... gr. j.
Compound rhubarb pill..... gr. xviij.
Phenol ..... gtt. vj.

Mix, and make a mass. Divide into six pills.

In this case you mix the carbolic acid with a little soap, add the pulverulent ingredients of the compound rhubarb pill, and, finally, the podophyllin. Powdered gum arabic and simple syrup complete the mass.

Croton chloral (butyl-chloral) should never be dispensed with excipients like confection of roses, extract of gentian, etc. It is best always to use colorless or white excipients with white medicaments. A very excellent mass for butyl-chloral is made with a mixture of powdered gum arabic, tragacanth, and simple syrup.

Pills of calcium chloride are not very easily silvered. In order to get a good result make the mass with Canada balsam and after the pills are rolled envelop them in balsam of tolu dissolved in ether. At the end of five minutes moisten them with a little mucilage, and then silver *secundum artem*. Chloride of calcium being very deliquescent even when thus protected, the pills should be dispensed in well-stoppered bottles instead of boxes.

There are two processes for making pills of creosote, both of which are taken from the *Bulletin de Pharmaci de Lyon*, as follows:

1. Melt 2 parts of white wax, and when cooled nearly to setting add 4 parts of creosote and 1 part calcined magnesia. Let the mass stand two or three days before dividing into pills. If it becomes too hard to handle, warm gently until it is of the right consistency. The length of time of standing may be shortened by adding a few drops of water to the calcined magnesia.

2. This process consists in adding an amount of gum arabic equal to the creosote, emulsionizing with a few drops of water, and bringing the emulsion to pilular consistency with powdered marshmallow. When making up in quantity, use equal parts of creosote, gum arabic, distilled water, and mash-mallow. The pills should be covered on account of the acridity of the creosote.

M. Ferrand, the well-known Paris pharmacist, prefers Martindale's process, as follows: Introduce into a flask with a large mouth equal parts of creosote and neutral soap, cork and agitate until well mixed; place on a water-bath, and bring to fusion, agitate, and let cool. The resultant mass mixes easily with almost any other substance, and the creosote is not altered as it is when chalk, magnesium carbonate, or calcined magnesia is used. The soap must be neutral and dry, and that made from animal fat is preferable to vegetable fat soaps, as it gives a more consistent mass. It will not be necessary to heat the mixture higher than 212° F.

U. S. Tariff Duties on Drugs.

The duties on principal drugs, &c., our American friends have to pay under the McKinley Bill will no doubt interest our readers. We may say these changes will affect our market very little, if any, as many of these goods have been bought in the U. S. for convenience sake, but by ordering in advance can be had from England at former prices, subject of course to market fluctuations:

Acid Boracic, four cents a pound; chromic, six cents a pound; citric, ten cents a pound; sulphuric, one fourth of one cent a pound; tannic, seventy-five cents a pound; tartaric, ten cents a pound.

Alcoholic perfumery, $2 a gallon and 50 per cent. ad valorem.

Alum, six-tenths of a cent a pound.
Ammonia carb., 1¾c a pound.
" murias, ¾c a pound.
Blue vitrol, 2c a pound.
Borax, refined, 5c a pound.
Camphor, refined, 4c a pound.
Chalk, precip. or prep., 1c a pound.
Chloroform, 25c a pound.
Collodion and compounds, 50c a pound.
Copperas, 3-10 of 1c a pound.

Drugs such as barks, advanced in value by grinding or refining 10 per cent. ad valorem.

Beans, berries, balsams, &c., 10 per cent. ad valorem.

Ether, sulphuric, 40c a pound.
Ether, nitros, 25c a pound.
Glycerine, refined, 1½c a pound.
Iodine, resub., 30c a pound.
Iodoform, $1.50 a pound.
Licorice, 5½c a pound.
Magnesia, carb., 4c a pound.
" sulphate, 3-10 of 1c a pound.
Oil, castor, 80c a gallon.
cod liver, 15c a pound.
croton, 30c a pound.
essential, 25 per cent. ad valorem.
peppermint, 80c a pound.
Opium preparations 40 per cent. ad valorem.
Opium for smoking, $12 a pound.
Sal Rochelle, 3c a pound.
Santonine, $2.50 per pound.
Sponges, 20 per cent. ad valorem.
Strychnia, 40c an ounce.
Tartar, cream of, 6c a pound.
Glassware, green, 1c a pound.
flint, 60 per cent. ad valorem.
chemical, 45 per cent. ad valorem.
Quicksilver, 10c a pound.

Free list—Assafœtida, bark cinchona, bismuth, bromine, camphor crude, cobalt, cochineal, dandelion root unground, drugs in crude state, ergot, iodine crude, ipecac, jalap, leeches, lime chloride, madder, manna, musk in pods, nux vomica, opium crude, containing 9 per cent. or over of morphia, potash nitrate crude, potash chlorate, pumice, quinia sulphate and all salts of cinchona, saffron, seeds not edible, spices whole, storax, sulphur crude, Tonquin beans, vaccine.

Salol as a Surgical Dressing.

At a recent meeting of the Hunterian Society Mr. Corner brought under notice series of cases illustrative of the antiseptic power of salol as a dressing for wounds, after the part had been rendered aseptic by a 1-in-20 solution of carbolic acid. He did not claim for it greater power than iodoform, and probably other antiseptics, but it had advantage over some. Salol, he said, possesses a pleasant aromatic odour, can be used freely without fear of irritation or poisoning, is absorbent of moisture, which drying forms a hard but friable covering. It will prevent putrefaction, but it will not destroy it when once established. It has been used for several years at the Poplar Hospital, and with excellent results, in compound fractures and dislocations; also as a dressing in amputations, minor and major, and in compound comminuted and depressed fractures of the skull.