

great feebleness. Despite this, M. Landerer was forced to walk in a circle around the centre table until he became so exhausted that he fell down. Vomiting supervened, and the administration of lemonade coffee and carbonic acid water completed the recovery. This symptom of turning round in a circle is characteristic of conium, and from this circumstance the plant derives its name, but still the fact is not generally recognized. The author thinks that the death of Socrates is not justly attributed to hemlock, but rather to some narcotic poppy, or opium.

ERGOTININE, A NEW ALKALOID OF ERGOT.—M. C. Sanret (*Comptes Rendus*, in *Pharm. Jour. and Trans.*, Jan. 1st,) announces the discovery of a new alkaloid in ergot, which he proposes to designate *ergotinine*. The process for its production is complicated, the product very small, and the so-called alkaloid extremely alterable. We are not told of the composition of this body, or its therapeutical relations, or whether the medicinal effects of ergot are in any wise to be attributed to it. The statement is hazarded that the instability of the alkaloid explains the rapid alteration of powdered ergot. As our knowledge of this new substance is, so far, exceedingly limited, conclusions of this kind seem premature. The composition of ergot is little understood, and affords a fertile field for investigation.

PRESENCE OF OXALIC ACID IN TARTARIC ACID MOTHER LIQUORS.—In an exhaustive series of notes on Tartaric acid, read before the Chemical Society by Mr. R. Warington, (*Journ. Chem. Soc.*), it is stated that old tartaric acid liquors have sometimes been observed to deposit crystals, which, on investigation, have turned out to be oxalic acid. The author has on several occasions noticed this, but is unable to account for it. It is not easy to detect this acid when so associated, even when it is known to be present. In order to settle this point it will only be necessary to dissolve oxalic acid in a solution of tartaric acid containing alum; all the ordinary tests afford negative results.

CONSUMPTION OF DRUGS IN JAPAN.—From the *Pharm. Jour. and Trans.* we learn that the trade in drugs with Japan is of no inconsiderable proportions. The annual importation of iodide of potassium amounts to 20,000 pounds; that of sulphate of quinine, 60,000 ounces. Potash was imported, during 1874, to the value of \$12,000, while mercurial preparations, soda, borax, ammonia, magnesia, chloride of lime, the corrosive acids, and various kinds of drugs of vegetable origin were largely consumed.