

PETROLEUM AS A MEDICINE.

It is a matter of surprise that the medical profession has not given more investigation and publicity to the virtues of native petroleum as a remedial agent in many diseases. Common coal oil has cured many acute cases of inflammatory rheumatism, just by rubbing it on the parts affected. Incipient consumption has been cured by taking the native petroleum internally. The writer knows of one case where the disease was so far advanced that the voice had lost power to speak above a whisper, and his voice was fully recovered, and his body was restored from its emaciation. The oil he used was pure native West Virginia natural oil of 29° gravity—a lubricating grade. He used about one gallon in doses of a teaspoonful, and was restored to robust health. It has also proved beneficial in dyspepsia. The oil-well borers are constant tasters of crude oil, and say it gives them perfect digestion and operates as a mild laxative.

Care must be exercised in procuring the right quality. Pure native petroleum of a gravity of 29° to 30° is the proper kind to use, and it cannot be obtained short of West Virginia. All the oils in market called "West Virginia" are manufactured in the still and are unfit for internal use. California oil contains asphaltum, and is unfit to use.

Dr. Blache states in the *Bulletin de Therapeutique*, that a refiner of petroleum, having been prohibited by a prefet the distribution of petroleum in medicinal doses, the fact led to an inquiry being made as to its alleged utility in affections of the chest. The native petroleum from Pennsylvania and Virginia was that experimented upon first. It is a very safe substance, for even large quantities, when drank by error; and in such cases has caused only a little nausea. In chronic bronchitis, with abundant expectoration, it rapidly diminishes the amount of the secretion and the paroxysms of coughing, and in simple bronchitis rapid amelioration has been obtained. Its employment in phthisis has been continued for too short a time as yet to allow of any opinion being delivered as to its efficacy, beyond that it diminishes the expectoration, which also loses its purulent character. The petroleum is popularly taken in doses of a teaspoonful before each meal, and after the first day any nausea, which it may excite in some persons, disappears. M. Gardy, a Paris druggist, has prepared capsules, each containing 25 centigrammes of petroleum, or, as he calls it, *huile de Gabion* from the name of an ancient petroleum spring, and this Dr. Blache considers as the most favorable mode of administering it.—*Exchange*.

The *Lancet* (London), raises its voice of warning to apartment house occupants, which is worth considering. An ordinary householder has access to every portion of the building in which he lives, and should he suspect a defect, he can ascertain how far his suspicion is correct, and remedy it. But in the case of flats, while the actual apartments rented may be free from all risk of evil, the tenant is, in point of health, almost entirely at the mercy of his landlord and of the occupiers of the basement, in so far as the main drainage of the premises is concerned. If this latter be wrong, the whole mansion is apt to be filled with foul air from below upward. A number of cases have come under our notice in which very serious ill health has been thus induced, and in which tenants have only been too glad to pay what was demanded of them in order to get out of the premises with the least possible delay. While no one should take a residence without skilled advice as to its sanitary state, this precaution is more than ever necessary in the case of flats, where the entire premises, including, above all things, the basement, should be thoroughly overhauled.

AN OIL ROCKET.

Results of the scientific test of an oil rocket designed to calm the raging of a troubled sea, appear to have been satisfactory enough to warrant the hope that shipwrecks will be rare occurrences ere many years. Four rockets, the same in appearance as those commonly used in ordinary pyrotechnical displays, but with the exploding cap removed and a light tin cylinder holding one pound of train oil substituted, were sent up at varying angles of projection, the result being that the sea was calmed for thousands of feet around the spot above which they exploded and fell. The oil spread into a thin, silk-like sheet, which, extending rapidly, appeared to have the power of keeping the waves within peaceable limits. Through the centre of the oil runs a small tube containing two ounces of gunpowder, which ignites as soon as the motive power of the rocket is spent, and, exploding, scatters the oil in a fine spray over the water. The action of the oil upon the water is almost instantaneous.—*Manufacturer and Builder*.

HOW IT WAS SETTLED.—The question as to whether the upper part of the wheel of a vehicle in motion travels faster than the lower part has been settled by instantaneous photography, in experiments made by S. W. Gardner. Mr. Gardner takes the photograph of an omnibus *en route*, and in this photograph, while the lower ends of the spokes immediately adjacent to the ground are not perceptibly unsharpened by the motion, the tops of the upper spokes show an angular motion corresponding to about 10 degrees. The photograph most successfully expresses the fact that the wheel it represents is in rapid motion.—*Exchange*.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE MICROSCOPE.—M. Govi, an Italian savant, has presented a paper to the French Academy of Sciences, in which he claims for Galileo the distinction of having discovered the microscope as well as the telescope. He has found a book, printed in 1610, according to which Galileo had already directed his tube fitted with lenses to the observation of small near subjects. The philosopher himself stated shortly after this date that he had been able to observe through the lens the movements of minute animals and their organs of sense. In a letter written in 1614 to a Signor Tarde he states that he has with his microscope "seen and observed flies as large as sheep, and how their bodies were covered with hairs, and they had sharp claws." The date usually assigned to the discovery of the microscope is 1621, and the invention is attributed to Cornelius Drebbel, a Dutchman; but, according to M. Govi, the date must be thrown back 11 years, and the credit of the first construction awarded to Galileo.—*London Standard*.

INDIAN INK.

I find that a color apparently identical to Indian ink can be produced by the action of sulphuric acid on camphor.

An excess of camphor should remain some twenty-four hours in strong sulphuric acid; it then results in a gelatinous mass of a slightly reddish color. This, when heated, effervesces, gives off fumes of sulphurous acid, and turns intensely black. By evaporation the superfluous sulphuric acid and camphor (for there remains an excess of both, the weakened acid not acting on the camphor) can be driven off. The remainder when applied to paper as a paint appears, to my unartistic eye, to be Indian ink.

When dissolved in water, it remains an indefinite time without precipitating. It appears to be dissolved, not held in suspension.—B. PIFFARD in *Chemical News*.