

Useful Counter Requisites.

(British and Colonial Druggist.)

The stock of pharmacy with a large variety of preparations of the chemist's own putting-up is an absolute necessity in the present age of rapid progression and keen competition. It is a necessity for several reasons. First, because the proprietor can fix his own price for his own preparations without fear of "cutting" by the neighboring grocer; second, because by the retailing of special articles of good quality a demand for that article is created which he alone can supply; third, because the attraction of customers for one article is likely to lead to increased business in other directions; and fourth, because his name is thus kept before the public, which constitutes a cheap and efficient way of advertising.

Moreover, if a pharmacist has a well assorted selection of preparations put up ready for sale, he has something to produce in event of persons coming in to be prescribed for, thus saving time and offering a ready solution of the disputed question of "counter prescribing." It is, of course, impossible to keep sufficient preparations ready to meet the requirements of all the various cases that are brought before him, but enough can always be on hand to recommend for the commoner classes of ailments, both those requiring external and those needing internal treatment. It is considered, generally, mistaken policy to recommend either of the numerous quack or "patent" medicines as a remedy for the ills of mankind, partly on account of the readiness with which such articles lend themselves to the attention of the grocer, thus taking the trade out of its legitimate course; partly, because of the special adaptability of these goods to that reduction of profits, term "cutting;" and partly because the pharmacist can have no exact knowledge of the ingredients in the medicine he is recommending.

It is therefore of great importance that the pharmacist shall have a complete and well-assorted stock of preparations of his own compounding ready put up, the quality and purity of which he can vouch for, and the therapeutic action of which he has ascertained from the composition. It is with a view to assisting pharmacists to give more attention to and increase this branch of their business that these lines are being addressed to them.

In the first place, a few words as to the style in which such goods should be got up will be *apropos* of the subject. Bottles for fluids up to 8 ounces should be white, flat, and preferably panelled, this making a very great apparent difference in the size; fluids for external use are, however, better put in apocynic green bottles, flat, fluted at the back, thus making a significant distinction. A series of round-shouldered white bottles is perhaps most suitable for cod-liver and castor oils, as well as for washes of the mouth or hair. Great care should be taken in the selec-

tion of a good quality of corks, as nothing is more aggravating for the purchaser than for the cork to break the first time of extracting, and nothing detracts more from the apparent worth of the contents. For preparations that act upon corks, such as ammonia or acids, stoppered bottles should be used, if the price obtainable admits of it, but, if not, only one or two bottles of it should be got ready at a time. For capping purposes, white leather damped and drawn tight certainly looks best, though the pleated bottle caps are a capital substitute; with either, care should be taken to remove all the superfluous material that projects below the string.

For powders, bottles with wide mouths, fitted with box-wood topped corks, are most suitable, the shape of the bottle being regulated by the nature of the contents, flat, however, being most general. Creams and ointments may be put in ordinary covered pots, but look better in a round white glass or opal bottle with a wide neck and metal screw cap or box-wood topped cork; the collapsible metal tubes are becoming very general now, and have certain advantages over bottles, though they are not available unless the preparation is of a firm consistence.

Labels should be neat and plain, giving all necessary directions for use; care must be exercised in the compilation of these, so as to keep them free from any offence against the Stamp act, and for this purpose the advice of some competent judge or the authorities themselves should be asked. Matters of this sort must be left to the individual discretion and taste of the pharmacist, and we must therefore go on to speak in more detail of the preparations themselves and of the mode of making them.

The first class of preparations requiring consideration are those made from

LIQUIDS.

Taking first the tinctures, there are a few that are in such constant demand in all parts of the country that they should be always kept ready in two or three sizes, varying from one ounce upwards. Tincture of quinine and the ammoniated preparations are useful at all times of the year as tonics, and there is a great rush for them in the season of cold winds, neuralgias, &c., the former article is improved by the addition of a small proportion of aromatic sulphuric acid, and the latter by the substitution of tincture of orange peel for proof spirit. The strong tincture of ginger (essence), tincture of myrrh, lavender, rhubarb, and a few others, which the experience of the pharmacist will suggest, are also to be found among the put up stock of all well-regulated pharmacies.

Of the official spirits, the three, sal volatile, nitrous ether and camphor are the most important, though the spirit of chloroform, under the name chloric ether, is inquired for frequently as a pick-me-up, and may advantageously be found with the other three on the shelves.

The liquid extracts of sarsaparilla, tar-

axacum, and cascara sagrada are very convenient for prescribing purposes, as they are comparatively harmless, and yet present their therapeutic properties in a convenient and concentrated form. Of course castor and cod-liver oils are kept ready put up, the former, preferably being the "tasteless" preparation, and the latter as fresh and free from odor and taste as possible. Fluid magnesia, put up in 8-oz. bottles for a shilling, yields a good margin of profit, and may be sold in large numbers if neatly wrapped in blue paper, bearing a white lithographic label.

Turning now to the official

POWDERS,

compound liquorice and compound rhubarb powders specially lend themselves to being put up in bottles, and should bear labels giving doses and directions for administration. The former of these may be prepared with soluble saccharin, instead of sugar, for diabetic patients, and the latter (Gregory's powder) with heavy instead of light magnesia; it is then more readily miscible with water.

Leaving now the Pharmacopœial preparations which are of necessity kept ready put up by nearly all pharmacists, one is confronted with a great mass of formulae for every class of chemists' requisites. The difficulty lies in making a proper selection from all these—in choosing the right and most suitable articles, and picking out the best formulae for them. All this must depend to a great extent upon the neighborhood and locality of the business, the class of customers, the season of the year, and other similar conditions; for instance, in some parts the amount of veterinary medicines sold far exceeds that of any other, while in other parts nothing of that nature is sold from one week to the next. On the other hand, a business in the latter place, especially if a fashionable resort, will probably sell a vast number of toilet preparations, not perhaps even kept in the country or market town where the veterinary medicines are in vogue. Great discretion must therefore be exercised in making a choice of what is most suitable for the class of business done, and then, having selected the formula, every effort must be made to get the best product from it, and to put it up in the most attractive manner.

Commencing with preparations designed as remedies for certain special complaints, those put up in the form of

MIXTURES

form rather a large class, and require careful consideration and selection. In all parts, however, mixtures for neuralgia, cough, diarrhoea, and indigestion are in constant request, and a quinine and iron tonic finds a ready sale in all parts of the year; a preparation of hops is always popular as a tonic. For formulae for these and most of the other preparations mentioned in these pages the reader is referred to the "Manual of Formulæ" shortly to be published, but in the meantime the following will be of use: