

Dispensing Counter.

SIMPLE PILL COUNTER.—According to Buwa, an extremely useful and simple pill counter can be obtained by making a shallow tray in the shape of an isosceles triangle. If the pills are thrown into the tray and shaken to the apex the first row (in the apex) will contain one pill, the second two, the third three, and so on. The number of pills on the tray can therefore be easily ascertained by counting the rows and referring to a previously calculated table (*Pharm. Post*, xxviii., 237).

An improved ointment jar has been placed on the market by a German manufacturer which seems to possess distinct advantages. A circular plate, which fits snugly into the cylindrical jar, is provided with a perpendicular rod with a screw thread cut its entire length. After setting this in the jar the latter is filled with the ointment and the peculiarly constructed lid adjusted, and then a thumb-screw is applied to the protruding rod. Near its periphery the lid is provided with an opening closed with a screw-cap. The jar being completely filled, its contents cannot be influenced by the air, and this condition is preserved to the last, inasmuch as it is never opened for removing a portion of the ointment, this operation being effected by turning the thumb-screw, when the contents will be forced out of the small opening.

DISPENSING DIGITOXIN.—In administering digitoxin, which is very soluble in water, care must be taken that the vehicle is so adjusted in alcoholic strength that re-precipitation does not take place in the stomach, or a cumulative physiological action from successive doses may result. According to Corin this may be avoided by dispensing digitoxin as follows: Digitoxin, 2 to 3 milligrammes; chloroform, six-tenths cubic centimetre; alcohol, 90 per cent. by volume, 12 cubic centimetres; distilled water up to 150 grammes. One-third part to be taken for a dose (*Repert. de Pharm.*, after *Scalpel*).

POWDERING CAMPHOR.—A writer in a German journal says that if camphor be powdered in the following manner it will not again agglomerate: Dissolve the camphor in $1\frac{1}{2}$ parts of alcohol, precipitate by the addition of four parts of water; collect the precipitate, wash with an abundance of water and dry. By keeping an account of the quantity of camphor used, the quantity left in the diluted alcohol can be calculated, and this solution used for making tincture, etc.

FORMULÆ FOR DISPENSING ALUMNOL.—(1), in the pure state as a dusting powder for venereal sores; (2), mixed with 80 to 90 per cent. of French chalk for burns; (3), in $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. solutions

for washing excoriations, acne or eczematous surfaces; (4), in from 2 to 10 per cent. alcoholic solution for urticaria, syphilis, etc.; (5), as an ointment, alumol, 10 parts; hard paraffin, 5 parts; liquid vaseline oil, 35 parts; anhydrous wool-fat, 50 parts; (6), as a collodion, collodion, 160 parts; castor oil, 20 parts; alumnol, 18 parts. —*Les Nouveaux Remèdes*, January, 1895.

MASS FOR MEDICATED BOUGIES.—Cacao butter, 4 parts; powdered gum acacia, 2 parts. Mix intimately and add, with constant kneading, a mixture of glycerin, 1 part; water, 2 parts. If required, the quantity of cacao butter may be slightly increased. —*Pritzker; Rev. Therapeut.*, February, 1895.

CREOSOTE PILL MASS.—The *Pharmaceutische Zeitschrift für Russland* adds the following to the list of methods suggested for preparing a durable and efficient creosote pill-mass:

Dissolve 2 parts of gelatin in 1 part of water and 8 parts of glycerin, by the aid of heat, and let it stay in the water bath until all the water is driven off, which may be ascertained by weighing the capsule and its contents. To this *massa gelatinosa* add 30 parts of creosote, while the mass is still warm, and keep the mixture in a tightly closed vessel. When creosote pills are desired, they may be prepared from this mass, every 4 parts of which contain 3 parts of creosote, by adding any desired vegetable powder. The journal adds that the pills keep well, and that they may be coated by any of the ordinary processes.

THE CARE OF STOCK-OINTMENTS.—If there ever were a subject honey-combed by the pen scratches of pharmaceutical writers, it is this same one—ointments. When we consider that there are twenty-three official ointments, besides being six cerates which are of kin, it would seem that so few in the matter of stock could be easily handled. But two ointments are required to be freshly made, yet experience teaches us that it is advisable to have as many as possible to be extemporaneously prepared.

To name the list of proposed ointment cases would take almost a page of this journal. It is like remedies for an ailment; the more extended the therapeutic list, the more difficult to handle the trouble. Just so with ointment cases. The majority of U. S. P. formulae call for benzoinated lard. This is often improperly prepared, and, besides, the lard is not what it should be. Experience tells us that it is hazardous to heat the lard of the market to any high temperature. The fact is, it is just as well to not even warm it. The lard carries a certain per cent. of water sometimes, and is often a mixture of oils brought up to the required consistency and melting point by means of some of the stearins. Heat dissipates the water, melting the stearin. In cooling, the latter

crystallize out, and the pharmacist has a hopelessly granular product. Yet we shall pass by all on this, and speak only of containers.

The paper label for stock ointment jars is very probably a thing of the past, for it soon becomes grease saturated, the letters growing obscure. The employment of porcelain jars is not advisable, for in time the enamel cracks, admitting the ointment to the porous interior of which the jar is composed, where it rapidly becomes rancid by oxidation. The glass label fastened on with cement is a failure. If you strain a warm, melted cerate like cerat. resine into the shop jar having a glass label fastened on by cement, the wax melts or softens, and the label either drops off or gets out of line. There seems to be no alternative but to turn in the matter of containers to glass—either blue, opal, amber or milk, or cryolite ware. Either or all are good. The white ware is neat, yet is quite brittle, owing to the large quantity of oxide, usually zinc, added in order to give the ware an opaque white color. The lettered ware with letters blown in the glass and ground on the face similar to the reagent bottles is the best modern achievement. This can be improved upon, in the opinion of the writer, for the lettering lacks clearness.

To color with paint the ground surface of the letters is quite a piece of work, besides being easily worn off. Now, if the manufacturers would only indent these same raised letters, or have indented letters blown in the ware, and fill up the depressed spaces or letters with a plastic cement, which would, upon drying, harden like stone, it would be all that is desired. Such a paste could be made of glycerine, or litharge, or any dry pigment massed with varnish, and could be colored brilliant yellow, red, or black as desired. The letters then would be of a contrasting color and indestructible, besides capable of being repaired with new cement when needed. It might be possible to bake the color in, but hardly practicable, for the heating of glass is not a cheap matter, being less easy of accomplishment than if the ware was of porcelain. Another desideratum would be a cover made of some material that is difficult to break. Every ointment shelf has a few jars without lids—broken by the boys always—and looking in the row like so many soldiers with their hats gone. —*F. T. Green, in Pacific Druggist*.

A NEW COMPOUND.—The product of the interaction of acetanilid and mercuric acetate is, according to Pesci, paramercuridiphenylenediacetylmercuridiammonium acetate. If this should be put forward as a new remedy, we trust a shorter name will be found for it.

Distilled water from which all gases had been set free, protected by covering it with oil, has been frozen by Prompt without any dilation of the volume originally taken.