

Pharmacy in England.

Annual Meeting of Society of Chemical Industry—Chemists' Shops, New and Old.—Sir James Sawyer on Borax Soap—Eucaine, the Cocaine Rival—Impure Cream of Tartar and the B.P. Test—New Duty on Cocoa Butter.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

The annual meeting of the Society of Chemical Industry has just been held in London under the presidency of Mr. Thos. Tyrer, F.I.C., F.C.S. The general meeting only occupied a morning's work, which included Mr. Tyrer's address, election of officers for the ensuing year, and presentation of the society's medal to Mr. John Glover, the inventor of the "Glover" tower. Luncheon followed at Cannon Street Hotel, and then the members and friends divided into various parties, in order to visit the Tower Bridge, several breweries, and a refrigerating company's machinery. In the evening Sir Walter Wilkin, Lord Mayor of London, held a reception at the Mansion House, which was attended by some four hundred guests. Further excursions were arranged for succeeding days and the proceedings concluded by a dinner and smoking concert at the Hotel Cecil. The arrangements throughout were very satisfactory, and the committee were heartily congratulated on their success. Early in the year Mr. Tyrer may be said to have started collecting the material for his address when he made his visit to the United States and Canada, because one of the avowed objects of his journey was a comparative examination on the spot of the technical education question and to ascertain in what manner practical manufacturing chemists are trained in the new world. With the German system he was well acquainted, and he himself is a good specimen of how the best English chemical manufacturers are produced. Born in 1812, he was educated at the Grammar School at Sidsley, in Staffordshire, and at seventeen came to London and attended the course at the Royal School of Mines, and Professor Hofmann's lectures at the Royal College of Science. He then went to the laboratory of Messrs. May & Baker, at Battersea, and for many years was a director of that concern, until 1891, when he acquired the Stirling chemical works at Stratford, London E., and commenced business on his own account. He was treasurer for many years of the Society of Chemical Industry, and has been on the council of the Chemical Society, and was formerly chairman of the chemical section of the London Chamber of Commerce. He has any amount of energy, a deliberate and somewhat diffusive style of speaking, wide chemical knowledge, and keen business instincts. It was during his term of office in the chemical trades section of the London Chamber of Commerce that the negotiations were concluded with the Board of Inland Revenue whereby English tinctures were allowed drawback according to the amount of alcohol present when exported abroad.

He has always taken a deep interest in the subject, although, probably, he has never exported a gallon of tinctures, as he is not a wholesale druggist. Still he has wisely foreseen that this step on the part of a great State department is possibly only the forerunner of further concessions as to the use of free alcohol in chemical manufactures generally.

"I am often told by the public," said a chemist to me the other day, "that chemists' shops are not half so pleasant to enter into now-a-days as they used to be, and that our pharmacies are not so interesting as they are on the continent." I thought that there was some truth in the observation, as in my early days it was a practice to gently spray some scent round the establishment two or three times a day, and customers entering used to remark on the pleasant perfume, which frequently led to sales of both perfume and odorators—oratomizers as they are dubbed in the States. Then there is a lamentable absence of floral and foliar decoration that serves to relieve the stereotyped appearance of a pharmacy, and this is certainly better managed abroad. The modern store principle of doing business is probably accountable for the deterioration, as every inch of space is wanted for glaring displays, in order to delude the public as to the vast quantity of stock contained in the—dummies!

Sir James Sawyer, M.D., F.R.C.P., is one of those practical therapists that are ever seeking after new methods for the exhibition of old remedies. Not many years ago, he was not satisfied with the old-fashioned chillie paste and tincture of capsicum, but advocated an ethereal tincture of capsicum and a liniment composed of ammonia, turpentine, linseed oil, and the ethereal tincture. Incidentally, he omitted to mention how the combination in the latter instance was to form an elegant preparation, but most druggists appear to have solved the problem by the simple plan of omitting the ammonia. In this way a clear preparation is obtained, and there is quite enough rubefacient action for any ordinary skin. Now Sir James is appearing in the pages of the *Lancet* as an advocate that chemists should undertake the preparation of medicated soaps. It appears that in certain skin diseases a ten per cent. borax soap is very useful, and it would be advantageous to physician, patient, and pharmacist, so Sir James argues, if the chemist would undertake this little matter, as then varying proportions might be prescribed, or certain other additions. The *Chemist and Druggist* offers a very hasty and badly-conceived *non pro. munus* to this suggestion. It seems to me that, if properly undertaken, there is no difficulty in the matter whatever, provided that the demand is sufficient to pay for the outlay. There would be no great difficulty in obtaining a small machine capable of incorporating the medicine with the soap basis and milling the same. Of course, it could not be satisfactorily done whilst the patient

waited, but a creditable article could be turned out after a few hours. But there is another suggestion that might be made to Sir James Sawyer. Why not prescribe these in the form of a liquid soap? There would be no difficulty then in turning out a liquid preparation containing the soap basis, borax, etc., dissolved in water, in practically a few minutes. It always seems to me a pity to receive suggestions from physicians, which are openly made in order to benefit pharmacists, with a cold shoulder or thinly-veiled sarcasm. This is hardly the way to encourage better relations.

Eucaine, the new local anaesthetic that was announced as likely to drive cocaine out of the market, has not made much headway in England as yet, but the article by Mr. Brudenell Carter, the experienced ophthalmic surgeon, will doubtless attract considerable attention. Mr. Carter performed the necessary operation for cataract removal and the only anesthetic employed was a five per cent. solution of eucaine. This was dropped on the eyeball every few minutes, and the only feeling expressed during the operation by the patient was that something seemed to be moving over the eye, but it was not in the least degree painful. Eucaine is a synthetic preparation, and produced at about two-thirds the cost of cocaine, whilst its greatest advantage, according to the evidence so far, is that toxic effects are not produced even when as much as thirty grains have been injected in solution.

Mr. A. H. Allen, the active public analyst for Sheffield, and author of "Commercial Organic Analysis," has drawn attention to sophisticated cream of tartar, and advocates the direct titration method as superior to the ignition and then titration of the B.P. test for purity. The matter has been under consideration of the B.P. Pharmaceutical Committee, and there is very little reason to doubt that direct titration of the dried salt will be suggested, with appropriate tests for detecting the presence of calcium tartrate or acid potassium sulphate, which sometimes occur as the result of faulty methods of preparation, and whose presence materially vitiates the advantage of direct titration.

Mainly through the influence of Sir Howard Vincent, who is always keenly alive to some of the anomalies under which free trade has to be carried on in Britain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has added cocoa-butter to the very select and limited number of dutiable goods. The real object of this move was that some of the German and Dutch cocoa products are bounty-fed and therefore obtained an unfair advantage when introduced into England. It will make very little difference to the drug trade, although it is the basis of nearly all suppositories, but its principal use for some years has been in confectionery and special toilet soaps of the superfatted character. Most of the foreign cocoa butter will not compare in odor, appearance, and purity with that emanating from Fry's, Cadbury's,