

refusing to join the corporation that looks after his interests. This need not be a matter for surprise. Even men of his calibre can soar to the dizzy heights of consistency.—*Student Series in Chemist and Druggist.*

#### Proposed Regulation of Patents.

A bill has been introduced in the United States House of Representatives in which it is proposed to create a board of chemical and medical experts, who shall have power to fix the standards of all drugs and medicines. It also provides that this board shall have power to grant licenses to manufacture any patent or proprietary medicine, and all such licensees shall pay ninety-six dollars per annum for such license.

Each box, package, bottle, or vial used for putting up a patent medicine will be required to bear a revenue stamp equal to 5 per cent. of the retail price of the article, and failure to attach such stamp is punishable by a fine of \$100. All proprietary articles shall be submitted to the Board for Fixing the Standard of Drugs and Medicines, and if pronounced healthful shall be permitted to be sold. No formula of any medicine shall be made public by the board unless it is found by chemical analysis that the article is not made in accordance with the formula submitted, but, if the standard is not as represented, "the formula shall be published and the fraud exposed." Any officer improperly divulging his official knowledge shall be punished by a fine of from \$500 to \$2,500, and imprisonment of from one to ten years.

It is also provided that no prescription by a physician shall be considered a proprietary drug or medicine unless sold under a proprietary brand; and that no retail or wholesale druggist putting up physicians' prescriptions shall be considered as subject to the license provided for, unless they shall also put up proprietary articles, by which is meant "all articles of drug and medicine manufactured and exposed for sale with the name of any individual firm or corporation attached thereto or printed thereon, or any article of drug, medicine, cosmetic, perfumery, or any article prepared therefrom and sold under a patent or proprietary brand."

The promoter of the bill states that the object of his proposed measure is for revenue purposes, and not for the purpose of aiming at the patent medicine manufacturers.

#### Determination of the Purity of Liquids.

Having been engaged in purifying a number of pharmaceutical products, R. Pictet has sought for some definite means of ascertaining their purity, and finds that in the case of liquids the direct observation of the temperature of their critical points affords a very sensitive test (*Comp.*

*rend., cxx., 43*). This temperature varies from ten to sixty times more than that of the boiling point in the case of a given liquid under similar conditions. The method adopted was to take a series of very pure liquids and determine their boiling points, noting the height of the barometer, and then to determine the critical points by means of a sensitive thermometer. A few drops of alcohol, aldehyde, water, etc., were then added to the pure liquids, and the boiling and critical points again observed. A tube of 5 mm. external diameter, 3 mm. internal diameter, and 45 to 50 mm. long, was filled with the liquid under examination. A portion of the contents was then evaporated, and the tube sealed by means of the blow-pipe, so that it was one-third full of liquid, and the remaining space occupied by saturated vapors. The tube was next placed obliquely in a small rack, side by side with a very sensitive thermometer, in the centre of a thin sheet-iron cylinder having two openings fitted with mica. A similar, larger cylinder surrounded this, and was warmed from below by a multiple gas flame, the current of heated air passing through a series of wire gauze partitions which divided the enveloping space. The whole apparatus was finally enclosed in a third sheet-iron cylinder, covered with asbestos, and arranged so that the tubes could be readily observed through the three pairs of windows. The stem of the thermometer passed through openings in the three cylinders, and it was possible to note distinctly the tenth of a degree. Chloroform, chloroethyl, and pental were the liquids examined. The temperature was first allowed to rise slowly to the critical point, when the meniscus suddenly disappeared, and very characteristic gyratory movements were visible throughout the length of the tube. The temperature was then gradually lowered until the transparent interior of the tube became suddenly opaque, the minute particles of liquid collecting at the bottom, and the meniscus reappearing. On warming again, and after several trials, a temperature was found at which within one-tenth of a degree the meniscus was observed to disappear and the mist become visible. This mean temperature is that given as the critical point in the following table:

|                                                    | Critical point. | Difference. | Difference in b. p. |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Chloroform, pure...                                | 253°.8          |             |                     |
| Chloroform mixed with a few drops of alcohol.....  | 255°.0          | -3°.8       | -0°.1100°.2         |
| Chloroethyl, pure...                               | 181°.0          |             |                     |
| Chloroethyl mixed with a few drops of alcohol..... | 185°.0          | +6°.0       | +0°.6               |
| Pental, pure.....                                  | 201°.2          |             |                     |
| Pental mixed with a few drops of aldehyde.....     | 199°.5          | -1°.7       | <0°.1               |

In taking the boiling point it was found necessary always to immerse the thermometer to a uniform depth at the same place, the same vessel being employed and heated by a flame of uniform power. The addition to a liquid of others more

volatile and readily soluble lowered the temperature, as when aldehyde was added to pental. On the other hand, the addition to chloroform, boiling at 61°, of the less volatile alcohol equally lowered the temperature of the critical point. Chloroethyl, which boils at +11°, had its critical point raised 6° by the addition of alcohol, which boils at 78°.8. It is difficult, therefore, to deduce a natural law.—*Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions.*

#### Alkaloids and Alkaloidal Salts.

We are in receipt of a chart compiled by Albert N. Doershuk, Ph.G., Kansas City, Mo., which is of undoubted value for druggists and drug clerks. It is a compilation of "The Alkaloids, Alkaloidal Salts, and Neutral Principles of the United States Pharmacopoeia, 1890." The official Latin and English titles and English synonym are given, together with the origin, physical description, chemical composition, degrees of solubility, doses, etc. Any of our subscribers who desire a copy may obtain one, postpaid, by writing to the *National Druggist*, St. Louis, Mo., who publish it as a supplement.

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