

and afterwards kept for indefinite and comparatively unlimited periods is that in which, more especially, the peroxide in abnormal quantity is found.

Impressed with the conviction that it is alike our duty and to our interest to avoid the use of a powder containing mercury in the higher state of oxidation, and that in every dispensing establishment it is desirable to have Hyd. c. Creta prepared at intervals not too far apart, I venture to suggest a slight deviation from the British Pharmacopœia process, to the extent of substituting for the slow process of trituration in a porcelain mortar, active agitation in a wide-mouthed glass bottle, by which means the B. P. quantity may be prepared and the metal minutely subdivided, with an expenditure of very little if any more, time and labour than is required to be devoted to the preparation of a tincture.

[In the discussion which followed the reading of this paper—in which Prof. Atfield, Prof. Redwood, Messrs. Umney, Bottle, Greenish, and others, took part—it was granted that the Hydrarg. c. Creta of commerce is always of uncertain composition, and often contains varying quantities of peroxide; a contamination which no doubt often gives rise to serious results. As to what the exact composition should be, no one could satisfactorily determine, but it was thought probable that if the powder answered to the test of the Pharmacopœia, which could be easily and quickly applied, it would answer every purpose. Prof. Redwood said that some manufacturers were in the habit of preparing the powder by putting the ingredients, together with some round stones, in a cask, fitted with an axle, and rotating the cask for an indefinite length of time, perhaps for weeks; in this way the preparation was unduly exposed to the air, and oxidation of the mercury probably resulted. Mr. Umney said that by triturating the ingredients under millstones, relieving the powder of the weight of the stones by means of a screw, he had often prepared ninety pounds of grey powder in four or five hours, he thought that the use of damp chalk might accelerate oxidation. In answer to an enquiry, Mr. Bottle said that in order to determine the condition of the mercury, and the probable termination of the process, he adopted the method taught him when an apprentice, which was to moisten his finger with saliva, and taking up a small portion of the powder, to spread it upon a piece of writing paper and examine with a lens. One of the members present said that in preparing the powder he had operated very satisfactorily by a method similar to that given by Mr. Bottle, but he finished the trituration in a mortar. The main points brought out by the discussion were that pharmacists should either prepare the powder themselves, or apply the pharmacopœial test to any that might be purchased.—ED. CAN. PHARM. JOUR.]