

Pharmaceutical Department.

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PHARMACEUTICAL NOTES.

By HENRY R. GRAY.

A new school of Pharmacy was opened in Edinburgh in May last, to prepare students for the major and minor examinations of the Pharmaceutical Society. The Lecturers are Urquhart, Materia Medica; Drinkwater, Chemistry; and McAlpine, Botany. These gentlemen, we believe, all graduated at the retail drug counter.

The question has arisen whether Chrysophanic acid from Rhubarb and from Goa powder are identical or not; at least so says, "New Remedies."

The American Pharmaceutical Association has postponed its Annual Meeting, which was to have been held at Atlanta, Georgia, in September, until the last week in November, beginning on the 26th at 3 p.m. Fortunately Atlanta has been singularly free from yellow fever, and, as the Association has postponed the meeting until the fall frosts have set in, there will be no danger whatever to Northerners making a trip to this delightful city. Mr. Wm. Saunders, of London, Ont., has the honor of being the first Canadian president of this flourishing Association. Mr. Saunders fills the same position in the Ontario College of Pharmacy.

There is probably no occupation more harassing, especially in the absence of an enthusiastic love for it, than that of a dispensing chemist. The public in front of him, physicians to right of him, nurses to left of him, and the law behind him. Seriously speaking, is he not entitled to more consideration than he usually receives? The responsibility on his shoulders is very great, and a wearing anxiety is ever present. Nearly every duty he performs might end disastrously to some one, and yet how few mistakes occur. To one who has spent many years of his life behind the drug counter it seems simply miraculous. Take as a proof any dispensing establishment, examine the prescription book, count up the vast number of new prescriptions, and the vaster number of repetitions dispensed annually, then turn to the mistakes and to the fatal ones, and what proportion do they bear to the many ounces of deadly poisons dispensed. Surely this care, this constant watchfulness, should entitle the dispensing chemist, when a mistake does happen, to a little more kind consideration, if not at the hands of an unsympathizing public, at least at those of the more intelligent physician.

MONTREAL COLLEGE OF PHARMACY.

The eleventh lecture session of this Institution was opened on October 2nd by an address from Pro-

fessor Bemrose. We regret that our space prevents us from publishing *in extenso* this valuable paper, the more so because it is difficult to present a digest of a lecture so thoroughly condensed, closely connected, and abounding with striking illustrations. Pharmacy was considered from its present standpoint, looking backwards, and also contemplating the possible future. In the former review there was found much to be proud of, especially in the attainments and success of the students who had attended the College course; the future was held to be full of hope. The principle which had led pharmacists to employ in their service the hydraulic press, the vacuum pan, the microscope, the polariscope, etc., will be sure to operate by allying to their use the galvanic battery, the tasi-meter or heat measure of Edison, and many other evident sources of assistance in the wide field of pharmacy. The preliminary education necessary for those who intend following pharmacy as a profession, and the necessity of a more solid groundwork was insisted on. Arithmetic, including algebra to at least quadratic equations, being deemed essential not only for scientific purposes but as a prime necessity to the business man. "In this respect what optics and mathematics are to the astronomer arithmetic is to the pharmacist, as it enables him to apply correctly the art of computation in estimating the profits arising from transactions in trade, and the intrinsic value of articles of merchandise. Erroneous calculations in these matters are fruitful sources of embarrassment, and tend to obstruct the attainment by the pharmacist of the position and benefits to which he is entitled." The steps taken by the British Pharmaceutical Society were just those required at the time and "resulted in men who have since made themselves famous as chemists and pharmacists, such as John Williams, B. H. Paul Schach of Clifton, Ince, J. B. Edwards, and many others." This was followed by the establishment of branch schools, several of which proved a decided success. The importance of knowing something about "physics, the laws of falling bodies, of reflection and refraction, of light waves and sound waves, the radiation of Crookes, induced electricity, diamagnetism, etc.," was admitted, but, although there "deep study is essential to the scientific chemist for the successful prosecution of his researches, it was not necessary for the students present" and in paying much attention to these subjects they would crowd out from their short course matters of much greater importance to them as pharmacutists. The same reasoning "applies to chemistry, the more difficult, albeit intensely interesting compounds, the rarer metals and metalloids will have to be avoided, and attention confined to the building up a useful and workable knowledge of the properties of those elements, the combinations of which furnish us with the salts, etc., constantly handled in daily work, their reactions individually and in group, the production of their compounds as articles of commerce, and the means of determining the purity of such compounds. Regret was expressed that pharmaceutical work by pharmacutists