

may be obtained, inert, or, perhaps, injurious agents, which would have been much better undisturbed, are dissolved and retained in solution.

It is not, however, to this modifying action that I would, at present, call attention, but to an effect depending on another cause. Physicians who have been in the habit of using astringents—as tannic acid, and some of the preparations of iron—have noticed that when these substances are mixed with glycerin, a different, and much milder effect is realized than when an aqueous solution is employed. During the last few months, some of the pharmaceutical journals have alluded to this effect;* and, at the last meeting of the British Pharmaceutical Conference, it was made the subject of a short discussion.† It was then stated, by the president, that he was aware of an instance in which three hundred grains of perchloride of iron, dissolved in glycerin, was swallowed, by mistake, and without any ill effects. It is certain that a much smaller quantity, in aqueous solution, would have produced serious results. The common experience of physicians with regard to the comparative inefficiency of *glycerinum acidi tannici* was also alluded to. Again, at a meeting of the Pharmaceutical Society held Dec. 3rd,‡ it was stated as a well-known fact, that, if a greatly astringent effect is desired, the solution of tannin in glycerin must be diluted with water; and that the same is true in regard to the styptic action of a solution of perchloride of iron in glycerin. It was also stated that *glycerinum acidi carbolici* was much milder in action than an aqueous solution of similar strength. At the last meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association the effect of glycerin on astringents was alluded to as having been noticed; as all these statements coincide with the opinions of observant physicians, this modifying action of glycerin may be recognized as an acknowledged fact.

It becomes interesting for us to ascertain the cause of this modifying action; and, in this endeavour, we may consider, first: the nature of the physiological and therapeutical effects produced by astringents; and, secondly, the effect of glycerin on the chemical properties of this class of remedies.

* Glycerin: by A. H. Mason, F.C.S., *Chemist & Druggist*, April 1873, p. 119; and *Can. Pharm. Jour.*, No. lxii, p. 396.

† *Pharm. Jour. & Trans.*, Oct. 1873 and *Can. Pharm. Jour.* Vol. vii, p. 172.

‡ *Pharm. Jour. & Trans.* Dec. 1873, p. 451.