

Pharmacy in England.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

BRITISH PHARMACEUTICAL CONFERENCE.—The event of the month is the meeting of the British Pharmaceutical Conference at Bournemouth. Following my usual custom, I will only give a brief abstract of each of the papers, which will doubtless be printed in full, where of sufficient interest, after their appearance in the official journal. Members were welcomed by the deputy mayor and some of the local medical men, whilst all the pharmacists in the neighborhood were there. Mr. N. H. Martin, the president, delivered his address, and those who thought that his mood on this occasion would change, and that he would throw off the critic's garb, were disappointed. Indeed, Mr. Martin never appears happy unless he is putting some one right or something straight—according to his own ideas. With his sturdy views on the professional aspect of pharmacy many will sympathize; but his tilting against pharmacy practising "the baser methods of trade" is Quixotic, and his objection to the admission of associates of the Pharmaceutical Society to the privileges of membership is illogical.

Ipecacuanha was the subject of three papers; Cripps confirmed Paul's analyses of emetine and the absence of any volatile alkaloid. Greenish reported on a number of samples of powdered ipecacuanha that he had microscopically examined. Out of 32 specimens 12 were Carthagena and the remaining 20 Brazilian. Only 7 were described as inferior owing to the undue proportion of stem. Bird suggested an acetic extract of ipecacuanha, made first by percolating with rectified spirit, acidulated with acetic acid, and then percolating with a mixture of water and acetic acid. The two percolates are evaporated to dryness and mixed. Sandal-wood oil may be checked for purity, according to Parry, by acetylation and then saponification with alcoholic potash. Parry and Sage also gave some interesting figures respecting cod-liver oil. Farr and Wright reported unfavorably, on the whole, upon tinctures as obtained from average pharmacists. The moral that they wished to point was that standardization as recommended by them should be adopted. J. C. Unney gave the physical constants of true *oleum pini sylvestris*, as compared with other pine oils. White recorded his experience in sterilizing surgical bandages, glass being replaced as a receptacle in favor of tinned copper. Elborne entered an amusing protest against the introduction of the metric system alongside of the imperial weights and measures. Dr. Symes drew attention to the new B.P. by suggesting that therapeutic notes embodied in the work would be more likely to lead prescribers to order pharmacopœial remedies. He also favored a secondary list of drugs that were still under trial and others that were becoming obsolete. Bird described a sully for the recovery of spirit

remaining in tincture marcs. Naylor tried to explain the smell often noticeable in syr. hypophos. co. as due to sulphites—impurities in the hypophosphites. Jones sent a new alarm to attach to the receivers of stills likely to run over if not watched. Braithwaite gave some particulars about Tolu, and Liverseege & Davis sent some experimental data respecting tincture of lobelia and tincture of cinchona.

At the conclusion, Liverpool was decided upon for next year's meeting, and Mr. Martindale was elected president. The social proceedings were eminently successful, and much enjoyed by all those present.

CACHETS.—The use of cachets for the administration of nauseous or insoluble powders has distinctly grown during the last year or two, hence I was not at all unprepared to find that they have already suffered a considerable fall in price owing to the introduction of French cachets. The price used to vary slightly, somewhere about \$1.75 per thousand; but at the annual exhibition of drugs at the British Medical Association, Messrs. Cooper & Co. offered them at 72 cents per thousand. These French cachets are the invention of M. Minot, who has also devised a special machine for stamping the name of the pharmacist or the name of the drug on each cachet. The principal improvement is that the name can appear in any color one may prefer. Messrs. Christy & Co., agents for the Morstadt cachet machine and cachets, have promptly reduced their prices to those of their new competitor.

DRUGS AT THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.—There was a painful absence of startling novelties at the exhibition of drugs, foods, etc., held at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association. Some firms made up for this paucity of novelties by displaying a considerable portion of their laboratory appliances. Thus Messrs. Idris, the well-known aerated water manufacturers, had a fairly complete bacteriological display, and demonstrated their analytical processes for determining impurities in the carbonic acid gas used, etc. A popular milk company also had a small analytical laboratory in full swing, and demonstrations as to the detection of formalin, boric acid, and other preservatives, were made and the usual processes for estimating fat in milk, cream, etc., shown. I noticed one or two firms of instrument makers were trying to become popular by distributing perfume on to visitors' handkerchiefs by means of odorators. In this way they were attempting to compete with the chocolate stalls and extract of meat exhibits, where there are free tasters. If this sort of thing goes on, druggists will find that exhibitions of this class are games not worth the candle. As it is, the medical men frequently ask for samples to be mailed to them of most ordinary articles, such as Blaud's pills, medicinal capsules, etc., which leads one to suspect

that they manage to set themselves up for a long time in drugs, etc., after an enterprising visit to an exhibition. Already some wholesale drug firms have objected to the enormous tariff for space demanded. Messrs. Richardson, of Leicester, and Corbyn, Stacey & Co., of London, have exhibited for the last ten or fifteen years, but declined on this occasion.

COD LIVER OIL.—The high value of cod-liver oil affects druggists throughout the world. Practically speaking, there is only one quality of Norwegian obtainable on the English market, and second quality is invariably Newfoundland. On comparing these oils, I have been struck with the sweetness and complete absence of fishiness in the Newfoundland oil. This bears out an American opinion that this oil is preferable for emulsions. Its gravity is about .927, and it stands the freezing test and answers the pharmacopœial characters.

NARCOTINE.—Sir William Roberts has lately drawn attention to narcotine as a neglected alkaloid of opium. He suggests the name anarcotine, as it has no narcotic properties, but possessed powerful antiperiodic value, and succeeded where quinine has failed in curing cases of malaria. So far, the medical profession has not responded to this appeal, and the anarcotine boon appears likely to fizzle out. Sir William Broadbent's opinion is worth quoting: "As regards the remedies in our possession, they are only too numerous. Recourse to a great variety of drugs is fatal to exact knowledge of their effects and to precision in their use."

This Transition Period.

Pharmacy at present is in an evolutionary stage, and, while we deplore the existence of many of the present conditions, we do not hold the pessimistic idea that pharmacy is in danger of being swept out of existence. Pharmacists are a necessity to the community, and if evolutionary laws hold good they are bound to come out on top in the end, though this is but Job's comfort to those who are struggling against the adverse conditions of the pharmacy of to-day. For the existence of these conditions pharmacists and physicians are both to blame, the latter especially, for the enormous growth of the greatest evil of modern pharmacy—the proprietary medicine. We do not, however, consider that this evil will grow much further, for with better educational advantages such a condition of affairs is bound to end sooner or later, and already we fancy we can see signs of the end.

To-day it depends largely on the pharmacist himself whether he will be merely a purveyor of drugs and galenicals, or demand and secure more or less professional recognition. Physicians we always find are only too willing to consult the druggist where such confidence is not misplaced.—*American Druggist.*