

Pharmacy in England.

Review of the British Pharmacopœia, 1898.

Photographic Notes—Trade Novelties.

From our own Correspondent.

The long-delayed British Pharmacopœia, 1898, has at length seen the light, although not yet actually published. The manner in which advance copies were issued was as badly arranged as possible. On the Thursday morning before Good Friday the editors of the various journals of medicine and pharmacy received a copy each, and, as a result, they had to delay their issue that week in order to notice the new B.P. It was the ironical working of fate that the only British journal of pharmacy, which has attempted to pierce the mystery surrounding the preparation of the B.P. and whose early publication of a review was promptly met by official denial of accuracy, missed any review Easter week as they had gone to press earlier than the others. Both the *Pharmaceutical Journal* and the *British and Colonial Druggist* had several pages devoted to the principal alterations, etc., and since then each week has shown that the critics of the 1898 edition will be quite as numerous as those of the 1885.

To Canadians the first disappointment will be that in spite of all official utterances the needs of the Dominion have not been considered in the least, in fact the Imperial character of the work is a misnomer. In the appendix a few alternatives and modifications of formulæ are mentioned that may be allowed in the colonies, but the real work of catering for their requirements is left for an addendum. Then the adoption of the metric system is such that to those accustomed to these weights and measures it seems ridiculous, whilst to those who are not often using them it will be confusion worse confounded. In one instance the exact metric equivalent is given to that of the Imperial, whilst in another it bears no relation whatever. But it is the new preparations and remedies that will attract most attention, whilst the omissions are always profoundly interesting. The medical committee are mainly responsible for this part of the work and conservatism is stamped large on the result. Only Virginian Prune Bark, for the tincture, and Quillaia Bark for alcoholic coal tar solution have really been added in the way of drugs, as fresh orange peel and

araroba were really official before. The chemicals added are bismuth, salicylas, codeine phosphate, hycaine hydrobromide, hyoseyamine sulphate, morphine tartrate, naphthol, physostigmine sulphate, quinine acid hydrochloride, salo, strychnine hydrochloride. The new organic remedies are represented by dried myroid gland and a solution of the fresh gland. The omissions are very large, and include all the household articles, such as honey, raisins, vinegar, poultices, soda water, etc. The most surprising omissions are amongst the preparations, such as ext. belâ liq., liq. ammon. acet. fort., liq. ferri dialysat, pil. ferri iodid, tinct. lobeliæ, tinct. valerian, tinct. zingiv fort., and ung. simplex. The most radical alterations are in tinct. aurant (fresh peel with strong spirit, instead of dry peel and proof-spirit), tinct. chlorof. et. morphinæ (now completely altered and containing four times as much morphine), sp. æth. co. (now only obtained by distillation) extract cascari liq. (cold water treatment), Bland's pill (now sodii carb. exsicc., and ferri sulph. exsicc.), concentrated in fusions and decoctions 1 to 10 and so on. All the tinctures have been shuffled, either as regards their strength of drug per pint or respecting the strength of alcoholic menstruum.

Standardization has hardly advanced since the 1885 edition, although a good show is made of the small advance, which now includes belladonna and ipecacuanha, whilst tincture of jalap based upon percentage of resin. Improved methods are given for the standardization of cinchona, opium and nux vomica and their preparations.

The chemical tests and botanical and physical characters have been elaborately extended, and in most cases show that higher purity has been the object in view. In some instances these are overdone and the result will be that only a refined article can be sold under the B.P. designation, which is often an unfair disadvantage to him as a trader. For instance, the tests for glycerine are so much improved that most of the commercial article will fail to respond, consequently the

chemist cannot sell B.P. glycerine to compete with a dry goods store prices even if he wished to. To the pharmacist who prepares his own tinctures, the new series of alcohols of various strengths will seem specially irritating, but it is an attempt to meet Farr and Wright's results on the standardization of tinctures. The adoption of a rectified spirit having 85.6 percentage of alcohol and specific gravity of .834, instead of the old spirit of 84 percentage and .838 was found necessary in order to obtain something like accuracy in diluted alcohols. The new spirit is 90 per cent. by volume, and the other strengths, such as 70, 60, 45 and 20, are easily calculated. The chemistry of the oils has been thoroughly brought up to date, and nomenclature has been carefully attended to. There can be little doubt that the new B.P. shows marked progress in the art of pharmacy during the thirteen years that have elapsed since the last edition, but it is by no means so complete as we had been led to expect. The additions are, for the most part, unimportant, the arrangement of the volume not so useful for reference as Squire's well-known Companion; the spirit of conservatism has been too strong, the chief characteristics are that articles of well-tried reputation, such as compound syrup of hypophosphites, Parrish's syrup, etc., or improved methods of administration such as cachets, capsules, compressed tablets, etc., are conspicuous by their absence. The marked indifference displayed by the medical profession in the publication of the B.P., and the complete disregard by the committee of the convenience of pharmacists where momentous alterations have been effected, would surprise foreign nations. It is not known, even now, when the new B.P. will become the legal authority of the medicinal preparations in this country, and it looks as if the General Medical Council did not care.

There is no diminution in the interest displayed by pharmacists in photography, either as a profitable extra or as a hobby. The makers and dealers in photographic appliances are never behindhand with novelties and prices are now much more reasonable than even three or four years ago. A friend of mine, a pharmacist in a London suburb, has a small window at the side of the entrance to his shop, and he used to fill it with the usual lines of perfumes, toilet preparations, and the like, but it was suggested to him that he