

the drug. The lack of satisfaction with which Mr. Holmes regards the question is not a mere matter of generalisation; he referred in some detail to the problems surrounding aconite, and foremost among these placed the difficulty of obtaining aconite root uniform in strength, a point to which Mr. Squire recently devoted much attention. More important, however, appeared to be the extraordinary variations in the strength of the active principle as supplied in commerce, samples of aconitine from one source being said to be in some cases seventy times as strong as those from another. The well-known change in color of an aqueous solution of apomorphine is rather a matter of interest than of importance. Mr. Holmes stated that the body to which the green coloration is due does not appear to have been examined; on the other hand, although the statement has frequently been challenged, it is asserted that this change of color in no way impairs the activity of the solution. Belladonna, however, affords a more promising subject for investigation: atropine has long been supposed to be the main natural constituent of the plant; it is only within the last few years that its position has been assailed, and it will probably still cause surprise in many quarters to learn that it is yet an open question whether or not atropine and hyoscyamine are both present as natural constituents of the plant. The fact that satisfactory tests are still wanting is shown most clearly by the confusion characterising many of the statements referring to atropine, hyoscyamine, and hyoscyne. Some of the other instances mentioned in this paper seem to trench upon chemical niceties devoid of general interest, but with regard to *cannabis indica*, ergot, and rhubarb the activity of the drugs lends considerable importance to questions connected with the source of activity, and this last is yet to be sought. The most varied results have been given by the several bodies obtained from ergot. The purgative principles of rhubarb and of the two forms of *rhamnus* now official have yet to be decided. From a purely practical and medical standpoint these numerous limitations of knowledge may seem of com-

paratively trivial importance. So long as the drugs can be compounded in some convenient form which retains the active properties of the crude drug, it might be thought that we should rest content with the old and press eagerly after the new remedies, which in so many instances promise to give such marvellous results. This line of reasoning is, however, hopelessly unscientific. If our vegetable preparations possess active properties (and upon this there is no room for doubt), it is surely most desirable that those to whom we look for information should be able to say definitely the exact source of this activity. Our debt of gratitude to pharmacists will be greater when they have solved for us many of the problems which Mr. Holmes has indicated.—*Lancet*.

NOTES ON CREASOTE.

Creasote is undoubtedly attracting extraordinary interest at present, and the professions seems to have arrived fully at a realizing sense of its efficacy in all tubercular affects, and necessity for employing only absolutely chemically pure creasote from beech-wood tar.

In a paper on "The Treatment of Laryngitis," in *Progress*, Dr. Sol. Solis-Cohen says: "Some such formula as the following modification of the London Throat Hospital's, may often be used with advantage:—

R. Creasoti (Beechwood) fl. ʒ i.
Ol. pini pumilionis fl. ʒ iij.
Magnesii carbon. levis ʒ jss.
Aque q. s. ad. fl. ʒ iij.

M. S.—Shake well before using. Inhalation mixture. One teaspoonful to be thrown upon a pint of steaming water at 140° F.

CREASOTE AND IODOFORM.—Barthelemy's formula, for use in cases of consumption, is:—

Iodoform (powdered) . . . 2 Gm.
Creasote 3 "
Balsam of Tolu 5 "
Benzoin (powdered) 5 "
Glycerin 3 "

The creasote and iodoform are first mixed, the glycerin added, and the whole