

A New Hemoglobinometer.

CHICAGO, July 23, 1896.

To the Editor:—In a paper read by me before the Chicago Academy of Medicine last January (and published in *Medicine* March, 1896) on "Color Measurement and its Application in Medicine and the Arts," I ventured the assertion that the hemometers and hemoglobinometers now in use were decidedly defective, for the reasons then and there set forth. I further expressed my belief that a modification of Lovibond's "tintometer" would be found more accurate and more easy of application than any of the instruments (Fleischel's, Gower's, etc.) then in use.

I was at that time conducting some experiments with the tintometer as a measurer of blood tints and promised to relate my experiences with it when these were completed. I subsequently found that Dr. George Oliver had anticipated me in this matter and had, like myself, visited Mr. Lovibond's Color Laboratories at Salisbury, England, for the purpose of investigating certain questions in chromometry.

The result of these investigations has been incorporated in the Croonian Lectures for 1896, "A Contribution to the Study of the Blood and the Circulation," delivered last month by Dr. Oliver. The purpose of the tintometer and especially its value in hemometry are fully described in Dr. Oliver's third lecture, published in the London *Lancet* of June 20 last, and I take the liberty of drawing the attention of the profession to that particular issue.

For the further information of those who are interested in chromometry generally or in that division of it which includes the determination of the chemic constituents of the blood by variations in its color I would say that the agent for the tintometer in the United States is E. B. Meyrowitz, Optician, 104 East 23rd Street, New York. CASEY A. WOOD, M.D.

Albumin Testing.

GREELEY, COLO., July 22, 1896.

To the Editor:—In our *JOURNAL* of April 11, 1896, p. 732, Dr. J. W. O'Neill describes a new apparatus for the cold nitric acid test for albumin. A more available way, giving a large surface of contact for the urine and acid, with very little mixing of the fluids, is to put the urine to the depth of about half an inch into a beaker of suitable size, *e. g.*, two inches in diameter. Take up about m. xlv of the acid with a pipette. Put the point of the pipette down through the urine to the bottom of the beaker and let the acid escape slowly, especially at first. One way to be sure that the acid escapes slowly is to watch the top of the column of acid in the pipette. If this goes down slowly one may be pretty sure that the stream of escaping acid is a gentle one. Close the pipette tight again before taking it out to keep the small amount of acid remaining in the pipette from mingling with the urine.

A little calculation will show that in a two-inch beaker the surface of contact is ten times the size of that in a five-eighths inch test tube, which is the size in the O'Neill apparatus. I think Prof. E. S. Wood of Boston, was the first to point out the advantage of a large surface of contact.

One incidental point about the apparatus here described is that it is cheap and of use for more than this one test.

C. D. NELSON, M.D.

Railroad Rates.

DUNKIRK, IND., July 20, 1896.

To the Editor:—Is it not about time we were agitating the matter of railroad rates to the association. I have been thinking for some time that as a society or association we have been practically ignored by the railroad companies. It is true we have had the very liberal rate of *one and one-third fare*. A party of ten going a hunting or fishing can get such a rate at any

time and on any road. Then look at the rates given other society meetings, such as the Christian Endeavor, the B. Y. P. U., etc. Also the great political conventions of the day. Within a few days of our meeting at Atlanta, the rate from Cincinnati was one fare. When we consider that the railroads get so much service from physicians and the only compensation rendered is an insignificant *pass* over a few miles of road we think it is about time to raise a howl about the rates given to our annual meeting.

And now as our next convention will be held at Philadelphia which is a great railroad center, let us investigate the matter and see if we can not get better rates. Let us hear from others on this subject.

Yours very truly,

J. B. GARBER, M. D.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

Poisoned with Belladonna Greens.—A family were poisoned recently in a suburb of Paris by a dish of greens gathered in their own garden and served for dinner. Seeds of the belladonna had been sold to them by mistake for spinach seeds.

Brooklyn Health Report.—During the week ended June 18, there were reported 674 deaths. The death rate was 31.3 per thousand, in an estimated population of 1,125,000. Of the total deaths reported 418 or 62.0 per cent. were of children under 5 years of age, and 333 or 49.4 per cent. were of children under 1.

Compulsory Rest for Working Women after Childbirth.—The *Progrès Méd.* of July 4 states that the laws of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium and England compel working women to a four weeks' respite from the factory, etc., after childbirth. The Society of Public Medicine and Professional Hygiene is advocating the introduction of a similar law into France, with an allowance from the public funds during the time of compulsory rest.

Germany Officially Investigates Colorado Climate.—Dr. Engel Reimers, chief physician to the public hospital in Hamburg, Germany, has been sent to the United States, and Colorado particularly, to investigate the influence of the climate upon tubercular patients. The doctor believes that the experiments made with lymph and other alleged cures are as naught compared with the outdoor treatment, and that the dry climate of Colorado is ideal for that purpose.—*Col. Med. Jour.*, July.

Water Supply of Allegheny and Pittsburg, Pa.—The report of the bacteriologic examination of the water shows that the three Allegheny samples contained from 1,600 to 6,250 bacteria to the cubic centimeter, while the Pittsburg sample contained 656. The water of Allegheny is much worse than that of Pittsburg, but both are far beyond the limit of safety. These results fully explain the high typhoid fever rate of the two cities.

Boric Acid in Milk.—While the addition of boric acid to milk does not make it poisonous, it produces certain deleterious effects, which should cause its use to be prohibited. Chemically, the presence of borax not only tends to neutralize the development of acids, which takes place during the presence of fermentation, but it precipitates and renders insoluble certain salts contained in the milk which gives to it a portion of its value as an article of food. Beside this, its neutralizing action upon the juices of the stomach tends to retard digestion. Bicarbonate of sodium, so frequently used by mothers and nurses to keep milk sweet, has a similar action.—*Pac. Med. Jour.*, July.

Decision Relative to Local Quarantine.—Judge Albright, Pennsylvania, declares that a municipality may rightly and properly be held responsible for the maintenance of families quarantined by boards of health, because of contagious diseases. In making this declaration the court applies precisely the principle of law which is currently acted upon in all cases