

"Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please—the more because they preach in vain.
Let us have wine and woman, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after."

But perhaps this formed one of the "brilliant passages," that he "screamed out" during his excitement!

Who can wonder at the rudeness of Preissnitz to medical men, if they come recommended by Dr. Wilson? Ignorant "poisoners!" murderers with "the most innocent intentions!" The great father of hydrophobia cannot feel safe in such company. How should he? They might murder him in mistake, and with the "best intentions."

Dr. Wilson should have paused before he denounced my statement respecting the temperature of the cold bath "as a wilful falsehood, and a deliberate misstatement." With the exception of a printer's error—for it should have been 80° and not 86°—I repeat, that that was the temperature of what was stated to be a cold bath by Dr. Wilson. I believe it to have been a mistake on his part, and that *not* a "deliberate and wilful one." Does Dr. Wilson forget the question put to him by a gentleman present, as to whether 80° was always the temperature of the "cold bath" at Graefenberg, and his answer to that question, in which he stated it was sometimes as low as 60°? If he does remember this, and he cannot fail to do so, with what truth or consistency does he charge the report as designedly false?

If Dr. Wilson did not know the temperature of cold water, why not say so—why beat about the bush as he did on that occasion, amid the compassionate smiles of some of his auditory?

I am glad to hear that Dr. Wilson is independent, although that fact takes away one excuse that he might have had for bringing the water-quackery to England. But is he a purely disinterested person? Does he work for gain, or does he work for truth? Hear himself on this subject. "For myself it may be said, that I am going to *pocket* a great many fees. No doubt! and a great many more than I can possibly want for me and mine. Let other medical men follow my example, and I shall be delighted 'to go shares' with them!"*

Ah! Dr. Wilson, you know well enough that this is a tempting offer to that "regiment" you have spoken of in your letter, many members of which, recollect, are not like yourself, independent!

You seem to think you know the author of the report: it matters not—he cannot boast as you can of having a sufficient income to travel abroad, or to stay at home at will. No, in spite of the charges brought forward in your letter against him, of falsehood and

misrepresentation, he, like Sir Lucius O'Trigger, is so poor, that he cannot afford to do a "dirty action." Truly yours,

YOUR REPORTER.

* * * Dr. Wilson styles himself a member of the Medical and Chirurgical Society. Surely he cannot be ignorant of the fact, that his name was erased from the list of members of that body two years ago.

CITRATE OF IRON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the number of THE LANCET for June 25, you have reprinted a paper from the "Pharmaceutical Journal," upon some preparations of iron, which contains a covert attack upon me. Relying upon your sense of justice, let me beg of you to give me the opportunity of setting myself right with the profession, which I the more readily undertake to do, as my reply will, I trust, present some points in relation to pharmaceutical chemistry which will interest your readers. At the same time I may observe, that while the said paper was confined to the pages of the "Pharmaceutical Journal" it was of very little consequence, but transferred to your extensively-circulated and influential publication, it might, if allowed to pass unanswered, effect its apparent purpose, of, first, reflecting discredit upon myself, and, next, of embarrassing the profession on the subject of citrate of iron. This will, I trust, be deemed an excuse for whatever is defective or incomplete in the information I am very desirous of presenting to the profession upon the salts of iron; a subject at present, as I think, scarcely entered on, far less exhausted. I, however, plead guilty at once to the offence which has excited the hostility of the editor of the "Pharmaceutical Journal" and his numerous correspondents, that of asserting, at the commencement of my career as a pharmaceutical chemist, that the science in this country is far behind the continent, and that improvement in the agents presented to the profession for their use in the cure of diseases, to a great extent, may be looked for.

The editor of the "Pharmaceutical Journal" says the *citrate of iron* has been extensively introduced to the notice of medical men under this appellation, without its real constitution being explained. Now, Sir, I have the demerit of being the person who has extensively introduced this salt under this title, and I have distinctly told the profession it is not a perfectly pure citrate of iron, but that it contains ammonia. Why, then, it may be asked, did I introduce it by the name of citrate of iron? For many reasons. First, the salt was prepared by M. Beral, and sold by him under that name; indeed, it has been used in France for many years. Secondly, by the analogy of the

* Preface to Water Cure.

ferri potas. tart. of the "London Pharmacopœia," it did not appear necessary to specify in its title the existence of the ammonia. Thirdly, from the objections which obviously lie against the change of names when once established. In a recent number of your Journal, Dr. Holt has set forth these objections in a most forcible, nay, in an unanswerable manner. Fourthly, from the difficulty of devising a name which should be unobjectionable. Chemistry is so rapidly advancing, that at present we have no hope of a fixed nomenclature.

Dr. Holt has well illustrated the danger of changing the names of remedies, with every change of view adopted by chemists. His arguments for adhering to a name when once introduced and known are irresistible. Let the reader again peruse what he says of the chlorides of mercury, and the case of iron is exactly parallel. It need scarcely be said that the term "*citrate of iron*" is not more precise nor more applicable to the *acid salt*, for which a formula is given in the "Pharmaceutical," than to the citrate of iron containing ammonia; and it has every objection which can be urged against this confounding of things different, and making one appear many. If the editor was so zealous to have correct names, why apply a name which had already been appropriated, and which does not designate the salt in question. There are, in truth, four (and perhaps more) citrates of iron, containing no admixture of alkali, or other substance. These four I have prepared, and they are in use as medicinal agents. They are the

- Citrate of the protoxide of iron;
- Citrate of the per (sesqui) oxide;
- Citrate of the magnetic oxide; and
- Citrate of the peroxide with protoxide of iron.

Upon each of these I purpose to make a few remarks.

First. *The Citrate of the Peroxide of Iron*: for which the "Pharmaceutical Journal" has given an indistinct process, is an acid salt, very difficult of solution, its formula probably being $\text{Fe}_2 \text{O}_3 \cdot \text{C}_{12} \text{H}_5 \text{O}_{11} + \text{Aq.}$, according to the views of Liebig and Graham, upon the constitution of citric acid, but not according to the editor of the "Pharmaceutical." This salt appears to me to have no recommendation for medicinal use.

Second. *The Citrate of the Protoxide of Iron* is well known to chemists. Its therapeutic properties have not been (so far as I know) distinctly made out; but it is very probable that they are very similar to those of the lactate. It is nearly insoluble in water.

The citrate of the magnetic oxide appears to be a preparation most promising, and deserving of a careful investigation in the treatment of diseases. Every one knows that the native, magnetic, or black oxide of

iron is a defined compound of the proto and sesqui oxides; the one acting as an acid, the other as a base. Now in this state it also combines with citric acid, forming a soluble salt, slightly acid. It is prepared in greenish-yellow scales, which dissolved in water produce an orange-coloured solution. Its formula probably is $3 \text{Fe}_2 \text{O}_3, \text{C}_{12} \text{H}_5 \text{O}_{11} + 3 \text{FeO}, \text{C}_{12} \text{H}_5 \text{O}_{11} + \text{Aq.}$

The citrate of the peroxide is, as we have seen, an acid salt, but it combines with, and is neutralised by, alkalies, earths, metallic oxides, and some (at least) of the vegetable alkaloids; forming a class amongst which are some most interesting and promising compounds. One of the most remarkable of these is the salt I have denominated citrate of peroxide of iron with protoxide of iron; for the protoxide neutralises the acid citrate of peroxide, and forms a soluble compound. This is evidently a distinct salt from the citrate of the magnetic oxide, its formula probably being $\text{Fe}_2 \text{O}_3, \text{C}_{12} \text{H}_5 \text{O}_{11} + \text{FeO}$.

I do not hesitate to confess that I do not know how the elements are arranged in this or the other analogous compounds, and therefore cannot pronounce what they ought in strictness to be termed. The names I venture to give such of these as I have already prepared for medicinal use are, I think, sufficiently precise to prevent confusion or mistakes; ex gr.:—

Citrate of peroxide of iron with potash.		
"	"	soda.
"	"	magnesia.
"	"	quinine.

The term *citrate of iron*, it appears to me, ought still to be retained for the salt rendered neutral by ammonia. In addition to the reasons already adduced, I would suggest that it is now in the hands of the major part of the profession, and is daily and hourly prescribed by that title. Its efficacy has been most extensively tested, and it would serve no purpose to disturb it, and to distract those who are in the habit of prescribing it.

It is remarked by Liebig, in his last work, that "no other metal can be compared with iron for the remarkable properties of its compounds." The subject is certainly at present occupying much attention. I am myself engaged in investigating some of these compounds, and shall be most happy if the pages of THE LANCET are opened to me by the insertion of this letter, to present to the public, through its means, any results I may obtain, and publish the processes by which they are obtained. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

LLOYD BULLOCK.

22, Conduit-street,
June 26, 1842.