

whole range of digestive disorders, in nephritis, neuralgia, liver disease and gallstones, exophthalmic goiter, neurasthenia, epilepsy, etc. As dependable evidence, these testimonials are not worthy of consideration.

A rational basis for the therapeutic value of Secretogen is lacking for the following reasons:

1. No evidence has been presented that the absence of secretin is a cause of gastro-intestinal diseases. It is usually present, and if not present, as in achylia gastrica, there is evidently some compensating arrangement by which the pancreas is stimulated to perform its regular functions.

2. There is no evidence that secretin in any form is physiologically active when administered by the mouth.

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Correspondence

Hexamethylenamin as Disinfectant for the Urinary Apparatus

To the Editor:—My contention in regard to the action of hexamethylenamin in the urine has been either misunderstood or misquoted in an abstract (THE JOURNAL, March 27, 1915, p. 1118) of an article by Dr. H. F. Høst. Inasmuch as Dr. Høst's work is essentially in agreement with my own conclusions, this misstatement should be corrected. To quote the review, Høst "states in conclusion that his research has demonstrated that F. Hinman was wrong when he said (THE JOURNAL, Nov. 1, 1913, p. 1601) that neutral or feebly alkaline urines are unable to split off formaldehyd. He adds that Hinman's mistake was that he did not heed the temperature in testing for formaldehyd, as this is a reversible reaction and should be carried out at 37 C." In my study I found formaldehyd in some amount in every urine tested, irrespective of alkalinity or acidity, but only 36 per cent. of the urines had formaldehyd in a strength of 1:30,000 or better, and over 90 per cent. of these had a urinary acidity of 2 c.c. or more of tenth-normal sodium hydroxid to 10 c.c. of urine and none of these urines were neutral or alkaline. Therefore, I concluded that neutral or alkaline urines are unable to split off formaldehyd in antiseptic amounts. However, I did not state that "neutral or feebly alkaline urines are unable to split off formaldehyd" in any amount, as is the inference of Høst. As stated, I found some formaldehyd in every urine, and, as shown in a paper read as early as May, 1913, before the American Urological Association in Washington, and published in the *Transactions* of that meeting, the great instability of the reaction was recognized. I stated that "formaldehyd, CH_2O , is a colorless gas, an oxidation product of methyl alcohol, CH_3OH . It is readily soluble in water, and liquor formaldehydi is the name given to a solution of the gas. It readily combines with many inorganic and organic substances. When treated with an excess of ammonia it will combine to form hexamethylenamin, according to the equation: $6 \text{CH}_2\text{O} \text{ plus } 4 \text{NH}_3 \text{ equals } (\text{CH}_2)_6\text{N}_4 \text{ plus } 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$. Contrariwise, if hexamethylenamin is treated with an acid it is reconverted into liquor formaldehydi. These changes, however, are, as a rule, of gradual occurrence, and depend largely on the degree of acidity, or of alkalinity, of heat, etc., and on the percentage concentration. A strong solution of hexamethylenamin, neutral in reaction, will break down to

some extent even at room temperature, as shown by examining the stock solutions of hexamethylenamin in the wards of the hospital, some of which, that had stood several weeks, showing a liquor formaldehydi content of about 1:8,000. Liquor formaldehydi and hexamethylenamin, therefore, are very unstable chemical compounds, and particularly so toward acids and alkalies."

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Ancylostoma, not Ankylostoma

To the Editor:—I have been interested in the correspondence in THE JOURNAL, April 18, as well as in the Current Comment, March 27, that called it forth. The reason for the spelling "ancylostoma" instead of "ankylostoma" is obvious to those who have a knowledge of Greek and Latin. All scientific names of animals are Latin words or in as near Latin form as the inventor of the names can make them. As Dr. Huffman says, if the inventor of the name makes an obvious typographic error or a wrong Latin transcription from Greek roots, according to Article 19 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, the name should be correctly written or transcribed. Ancylostoma is derived from the Greek words ἀγκύλος, στόμα. The Latin transcription of ἀγκύλο- is obviously ancylo-. As Dr. Stiles has bestowed on the hookworm commonly found in the United States, the simple, euphonious and expressive term "necator," the new and correct spelling of the Old World hookworm will not give American physicians much concern.

A good many persons probably objected to the change of Acidum Carbolicum to Phenol, but I presume most physicians are accepting the official form of the word now. In a short time doubtless all will be accepting the internationally official spelling of the Old World hookworm, ancylostoma.

Those who prefer ankylostoma ought in strict consistency to spell leukocyte leukokyte from the Greek λευκός, κύτος, and cytology, kytology, and so on, for every word with the commonly used root cyto. Those who find no difficulty in saying micrococki for micrococci can easily give the pronunciation of k to the letter c in ancylostoma, while others who use the pronunciation micrococci will pronounce ancylostoma with the c of the word soft, as Dr. Hirshberg suggests.

C and k in English words, particularly in technical words, are extremely awkward letters. It is unfortunate that we have no system of slipping in an h as the Italians do when c is hard before e, i, and y, and as is actually, but incorrectly, done in writing anchylosis for ankylosis or ancylosis. A still better plan would be to eliminate c entirely and use s when it is soft and k when hard, as is done by the English Simplified Spelling Society.

A strict Latinized form of certain common words would make many interesting changes and many words scarcely recognizable, such as leucaemia (which is sometimes seen) for the usual leukaemia. Kinetic energy and kinesthetic sense would become cinetic energy and cinesthetic sense, forms which I have never seen. Cinematograph, however, is probably familiar to all.

A large part of the differences in spelling of words containing c and k perhaps depends on the classical training of the person who first invented the terms and on the language which first placed the word in science, k being conspicuous in German words and c in French.

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Uniformity in Labels of Tubes Containing Hypodermic Tablets

To the Editor:—Some makers of hypodermic tablets label the tubes to read toward the cork, and some toward the bottom of the tubes. This causes annoyance and delay in selecting tablets; often one is in a big hurry to give a hypodermic. Why not ask the manufacturers to label all one way, preferably toward the cork, for that puts the tube into the left hand and the cork into the right?

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