

"We contend that the official menstruum is not the one best fitted properly to extract the drug; that the fluid extract made by use of the official menstruum deteriorates rapidly; that this menstruum is inferior to the one we use for our F. E. Digitalis, P. D. & Co., No. 597; and that the U. S. P. extract does not come up to our own standard as represented by the last-mentioned product. We do claim, however, that our F. E. Digitalis, U. S. P., is made from the best quality of drug in strict harmony with the official process. We do not standardize it; we have never pretended to.

"Furthermore, Dr. Hatcher's 'cat method' of testing Fluid Extract Digitalis is rejected by Edmunds and Hale, whose opinion of the 'cat method' is unquestionably shared to-day by the vast majority of competent pharmacologists: see Bulletin No. 48, issued by the Hygienic Laboratory of the U. S. Public Health Service."

One of Parke, Davis & Co.'s house organs, the *Bulletin of Pharmacy*, in its issue for December, 1913, p. 486, contains a similar statement. From this I quote:

"W. A. Puckner, the chemist of the American Medical Association, contributed a paper to a recent number of THE JOURNAL of the A. M. A., reporting among other things upon an examination made of various fluid extracts of digitalis upon the American market. . . . Parke, Davis & Co. was one of the four manufacturers involved, and its fluid extract was said to be only 57.66 per cent. of the standard. We are informed by that house [the reader should bear in mind whose journal it is that is speaking], however, that for two reasons the findings of Dr. Puckner are grossly unjust and fallaciously misleading."

According to reports which I have received, Parke, Davis & Co.'s detail men appear to have taken their stock arguments from the matter quoted above. Parke, Davis & Co. have thus attempted to create the impression that I discriminated against them in the paper referred to—"The Quality of Drugs Sold to Dispensing Physicians." Specifically, they complain that this examination included their regular U. S. P. Fluid Extract of Digitalis, but did not include their own special, non-official preparation.

As Parke, Davis & Co. seem to have misunderstood the principles which governed the selection of the drugs for the examination, and as those who received their letter or listened to the firm's detail men may be misled, I wish to emphasize that the examinations reported on in my paper were in no way concerned with any firm's special or proprietary preparation, but dealt only with the regular, non-proprietary, standard, official drugs. The principle on which the drugs were selected was to obtain those that the physician would have obtained had he written a prescription or sent to the source of his supplies. Thus, in the case of fluidextract of digitalis the regular U. S. P. title was used in ordering all of the brands, the order reading "Fluid Ext. Digitalis, P. D. & Co." "Fluid Ext. Digitalis, Mulford," etc. The examination of the fluidextracts of digitalis was an attempt to learn the quality of the market supply—the kind which the druggist, the physician and the patient would get. I must say, however, that I was surprised to learn that Parke, Davis & Co. should permit a preparation of digitalis to leave their establishment without biologic control. I am all the more surprised in view of this statement, found in the firm's 1911-1912 catalog (the latest I have):

"All our Fluid Extracts are adjusted to a fixed alkaloidal or other standard; in cases where chemical reactions are not available, as with digitalis, aconite, ergot and a few others, test is made on animals by methods which yield reliable data, not only of quality, but of degree of activity."

Evidently "All our Fluid Extracts" does not include fluid-extract of digitalis, U. S. P.

Parke, Davis & Co. contend that the official process is likely to produce a preparation which is weak and unstable, but the labels of Parke, Davis & Co. and the Mulford Company products are practically identical so far as both declare the preparations to be "Fluid Extract Digitalis, U. S. P.," to contain practically the same percentage of alcohol and to have been made at about the same time, the former Sept. 3, 1912, and the latter Nov. 23, 1912.

In this connection it might be pertinent to call attention to another very important fact. While Parke, Davis & Co. are trying to evade responsibility by making it appear that the official fluidextract cannot be expected to be of 'good quality, at the same time the firm considers itself justified in saying that the U. S. P. tincture may be prepared from it.

The following appears on the label of the Parke, Davis & Co. specimen examined:

"Formula Tincture Digitalis, U. S. P.  
Fld. Ext. Digitalis, U. S. P. . . . . . 1 3/5 fluidounces  
Diluted alcohol, sufficient to make . . . . . 16 fluidounces"

If the Parke, Davis & Co. fluidextract of digitalis, U. S. P., is not sufficiently active and reliable to represent the leaf perfectly—and the firm now admits this—it is extremely difficult to understand how they can justify their recommendation to pharmacists that the tincture be made in this way.

The claim that Edmunds and Hale in Bulletin 48 of the Hygienic Laboratory of the United States Public Health Service had rejected Hatcher's "cat method" is unfair because the Hatcher method did not appear until about two years after the publication of this bulletin. It is true that a cat method was reported on, but it was in no way so elaborate or so carefully worked out as the Hatcher method. Although the Hatcher method has not been widely adopted it is generally conceded that by its use the comparative activity of digitalis preparations may be determined correctly.

In conclusion let me say that this investigation of digitalis preparations was made in the interest of the public, the medical profession and scientific pharmacy and medicine; my paper was written, read before a section of the American Medical Association and published solely for the purpose of giving the medical profession the actual facts without fear of, or favor to, any firm, be it large or small.

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Director, Chemical Laboratory of the American  
Medical Association.

#### Hoffa's Statement as to Determining the Condition of Muscle

To the Editor:—In the article on "The Treatment of Paralysis of Anterior Poliomyelitis" (THE JOURNAL, Dec. 20, 1913, p. 2219) there occurs a statement which is so very inaccurate that it seems to me to require correction. After speaking of the difficulty of determining the power of the muscle by electrical examination, Dr. Frauenthal says, "Hoffa always cut down on the muscle to determine its character." What Hoffa (*Orthopädische Chirurgie*, Ed. 5, 1905, p. 142) really said, in speaking of tendon transplantation, was as follows: "If, in spite of the closest examination, one is not prepared to decide whether the muscle in question is wholly or partly paralyzed, one may obtain information at the operation itself if one exposes not only the tendon but the belly of the muscle itself by a longer incision."

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#### Stethophone and Stethoscope

To the Editor:—Kindly permit me to say to Dr. Joseph H. Barach of Pittsburgh that "stethoscope" is really a genuine Greek word meaning, exactly, an instrument to examine the chest. It appears that Dr. Barach's Greek-English dictionary is imperfect. It is to be regretted that Dr. Barach uses such hybrid terms as "auriscope" and "dictaphone."

A. ROSE, M.D., New York.

**Quarantine and Individual Inconvenience.**—It is neither the province nor the intention of the Department of Health to give an individual or the public the preference over the other in quarantine matters. This does not always seem so from the individual's point of view in cases of communicable diseases. While quarantine may, in some instances, result in personal inconvenience and often in hardships, yet the safety of the community must be the first consideration. The same measures which work an apparent hardship also serve as a protection. This is a well-established principle in public health administration and has been upheld by the courts. The convenience of the few must be subject to the safety of the many.—*Buffalo Sanitary Bull.*