

25 yellow tablets, having an average weight of 0.276 gm. ($4\frac{1}{4}$ grains). After being powdered, "Syphilodol" was found to be only partially soluble in water (the excipient is soluble) and to be neutral in reaction. These findings contradict the claims on the circular accompanying the bottle to the effect that "Syphilodol is a yellow powder, soluble in water, and has an acid reaction." Qualitative tests indicated the presence of mercury, sucrose (cane sugar), iodid, calcium, sulphate, fatty material, a trace of silver, a trace of arsenic and a very minute trace of antimony; a red dye was also present. Both qualitative and quantitative data showed that the mercury was present in the form of mercurous iodid (yellow iodid of mercury—hydrargyri iodidum flavum). Quantitative estimations yielded the following:

Silver (Ag ⁺)	0.001	per cent.
Mercury (Hg ⁺)	11.1	per cent.
Iodid (I ⁻)	7.8	per cent.
Sucrose (Cane sugar)	72.0	per cent.
Ash (Calcium Sulphate)	2.5	per cent.
Ether-soluble material (Fatty material—Petrolatum)	3.5	per cent.

Thus each tablet of "Syphilodol" contains approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ grain of mercurous iodid. An ampule of "Syphilodol," labeled 0.4 gram, contained approximately 1.5 c.c. of a liquid which after evaporation on a water-bath left a residue weighing 0.8 mg., or $\frac{1}{80}$ grain. A second ampule held about 2 c.c. of liquid, which contained a trace of arsenic (less than 0.00001 gm., or $\frac{1}{6000}$ grain); a very small amount of mercury was indicated but not definitely established. The liquid had the physical characteristics of water.

Accompanying "Syphilodol" advertising sent to physicians is a circular letter inviting the doctor to become a member in the "United States Bacteriological and Research Institute." The "institute" seems to be a means of suggesting that the physician have bacteriologic, pathologic and serologic examinations made on behalf of his patients. In view of the fact that it is to the commercial interest of the French Medicinal Company to have as many users of "Syphilodol" as possible, it would be interesting to know what proportion of the Wassermann tests are reported negative.

Shorn of its mystery, Syphilodol the "synthetic chemical product of silver, arsenic and antimony" is essentially mercurous iodid—yellow iodid of mercury.

PYOCYANEUS BACILLUS VACCINE OMITTED FROM N. N. R.

Report of the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry

The Council has authorized publication of the following report.

W. A. PUCKNER, Secretary.

Pyocyaneus bacillus vaccine, made from *Bacillus pyocyaneus*, was admitted to New and Nonofficial Remedies in 1910. At that time this vaccine was considered to give promise of having therapeutic value.

Now three of the firms whose preparations of this vaccine are described in New and Nonofficial Remedies advise the Council that they have ceased to manufacture the vaccine because of lack of demand. The fourth firm stated that in the printing of a new list of its biologic products, pyocyaneus vaccine would not be included, and that the preparation would be supplied on demand only.

The referee of the Committee on Serums and Vaccines in charge of pyocyaneus bacillus vaccine held that the discontinuance of the preparation by interested firms, for the reason that there was no demand for it, evidences that it had been proved without value. He reported that a search of recent literature failed to reveal any evidence of its usefulness.

On the recommendation of the referee, the Council directed that the several preparations of the vaccine be omitted from New and Nonofficial Remedies.

Child Hygiene.—When, in addition to our attention to the welfare of infants, we devote greater interest and more earnest efforts to the hygiene of children between the second and fifth years of life, the beneficent effect will soon be indicated in the falling death rate of the whole community.—*Public Health* (Mich.).

Correspondence

A METHOD FOR DECOLORIZING AND STAINING BLOOD FILMS

To the Editor:—Having to make and examine many blood films in the course of our routine work (1,163 in 1917) we found it somewhat of a problem to make Arneth and differential counts, study the morphology of the cells and look for malaria at the same time, with fair assurance that, if present, the malarial parasite could be found while counting and examining 100 or 200 white cells.

Mr. G. E. Burke, C.E., F.R.M.S., who was my co-worker in the blood laboratory, discovered a quick method of decolorizing the unstained films, which, combined with my staining methods, gave us a specimen, in half of which the red cells had disappeared, but the leukocytes, platelets, nuclei, etc., were brought out sharply, and apparently improved in staining qualities; and the other half of which was as of an ordinary smear, and was used for studying the red cells. Our method gives uniformity of results, freedom from precipitates and artefacts, lack of "messiness" and great time saving, and is as follows:

The blood smear is made on a slide, but, preferably, one that is drawn out to extreme thinness, and allowed to dry. It is not fixed.

The lower half of the smear is covered with the clean slide, strong pressure being employed to exclude air, and the exposed half of the blood smear is breathed on heavily. This is repeated if necessary. Where the breath comes in contact with the film, the red cells disappear.

The slide is immersed from thirty seconds to three minutes in stain, transferred to water in a Coplin jar from one minute to three minutes, washed ten seconds in the clear distilled water, and stood upright to dry, or blotted. The same water may be used repeatedly, and eight slides at a time stained.

Being a layman I cannot, of course, speak with much authority on such matters; but Mr. Burke and I would be pleased to learn if this method has been used before, and with what success. If it has not been used before, we think it is worth trying out, especially in malaria. We have had uniform success with the method in ordinary blood work so far. What happens to the erythrocytes when breathed on that they should disappear?

F. W. LACY, F.R.M.S., Fort Lyon, Colo.

"SERUM DIAGNOSIS OF SYPHILIS"

To the Editor:—Permit me to voice a protest against the adoption by Army and Navy laboratories of the method of performing the Wassermann test proposed by Dr. Hideyo Noguchi in THE JOURNAL, April 20, 1918. This method is open to a number of sources of error which would on the one hand tend to brand innocent men with the stigma of syphilis, and on the other cause cases of syphilis to escape detection which could be detected by more exact methods. I think the matter of sufficient importance to request the space necessary to point out these sources of error.

In every complement fixation test the complement acts as a unit of measurement by which the fixing power of a serum under examination is measured. It must be apparent even to the uninitiated that this measuring unit must be a known quantity in order that it may be effectively used as a standard by which to measure an unknown quantity. Wassermann, realizing this, selected guinea-pig serum as the source of complement because its complement content was more uniform than that of any other animal he had examined. In recent years careful workers (compare Ottenberg: On the Reliability of the Wassermann Reaction, *Arch. Int. Med.*, March, 1917, p. 457) have come to the conclusion that even guinea-pig serum varied so much in complement content as to introduce an inexcusable source of error. Dr. Noguchi himself (Noguchi and Bronfenbrenner: Variations in the Complement Content and Fixability of Guinea-Pig Serum,