ABSTRACT OF PAPERS READ BEFORE THE BRITISH PHARMACEUTICAL CONFERENCE AT SWANSEA.

Note on Indian Henbane.

By T. Greenish.

The official biennial henbane leaf has of late years become very scarce in this country, and it was with considerable interest that the author undertook the examination of a small sample of henbane leaf sent from India by Dr. Dymock. It arrived in a tin box without any particulars as to its being the produce of the annual or biennial plant, place of growth, character of soil, the result of cultivation, or otherwise. On removal from the tin the leaves had a clammy feel; they possessed an intense odour, very persistent on the hand, and generally stronger than that of ordinary henbane.

Dried at 80° F., it lost 7 per cent. The odour passed off almost entirely in the process of drying.

A tincture prepared by maceration was a brown-olive, whereas the official tincture is olive-green, and the colour more intense. A little added to water produced no opalescence, and gave only a tinge of colour; the official tincture, on the contrary, produced considerable opacity, which, on the addition of a little liquor potassæ, disappeared.

In the general structure of the leaf the author found no very material difference.

Extracts made from the two tinctures were relatively 3·43 for the Indian henbane, as compared with 4·20 for the British Pharmacopœia.

It might be worth while to make a tincture with the leaf without previously drying it, so that the strong odour which is probably due to some volatile principle, and also the acridity might be retained, and probably increase the therapeutic value of the product.

On the Detection of Amorphous Quinine in Citrate of Iron and Quinine.

By Dr. De Vrij.

Amorphous Quinine substituted for crystalline in the above is easily soluble in ether, and the substitution will not, therefore, be detected by the test of the Pharmacopœia. It can, however, be detected by transforming the separated quinine into a neutral oxalate. This oxalate after being thoroughly dried on a water-bath is dissolved in chloroform, and the solution, if necessary, filtered. If a few drops of water are put on the top of this solution in a test-tube the oxalate of quinine will take a part of the water and crystals of oxalate of quinine will appear in the chloroform, whilst the water on the top remains clear and uncoloured if the medicine is not sophisticated. If it contains, however, amorphous quinine the oxalate of this base will be taken up from the solution in chloroform, and the water on the top of this solution will be more or less yellow coloured by the oxalate of amorphous quinine which has been dissolved by the water.

The Presence of Arsenic in Tincture and Solution of Perchloride of Iron.

By F. W. Fletcher, F.C.S.

The author enumerated several observations of the presence of arsenic as an impurity in pharmaceutical preparations, and to that list he said he had the melancholy satisfaction of

contributing an addition. Having detected arsenic in samples of hydrochloric acid, many of which had been sold as pure, he thought that possibly a considerable portion of the liquor ferri perchlor. of pharmacy prepared with similar acid might contain arsenic. This had proved to be the case in samples of the liquor, and also of the tincture, which had been obtained from various eminent dispensing houses. In one instance the proportion of 33·8 grains As_2O_3 in the 100 fluid oz. of the liquor were detected. The other instances given showed 10, 12, and 13 grains per 100 fluid oz. of liquor.