

SOME DRUG ADULTERANTS OF NOTE.

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[Abstract.]

PHYTOLACCA DECANDRA L.—The leaves, inflorescence and young fruiting racemes were found mixed to the extent of about thirty per cent. in bales of belladonna leaves received in Indianapolis from Germany, December, 1898. Since then the writer has not found them as an adulterant, though many other lots have been carefully searched. The presence of Phytolacca was first betrayed by the abundance of young flowering and fruiting racemes. Deprived of these, Phytolacca leaves make a very clever adulterant for belladonna leaves, as the two resemble in many particulars, especially when dried and crushed or compressed in the manner customary for shipment. Critical examination, however, reveals many differences of odor, texture, color, size, shape and other gross characters.

Since this report was made, in December, 1901, the writer has found that Dr. C. Hartwich [Schweitz. Wochensch. f. Chem. u. Pharm., 1901, p. 430] gives an account of a similar discovery. Furthermore, Dr. Hartwich points out some of the histological differences between the two, so that, according to established rules, he deserves the credit of priority.

*GENISTA TINCTORIA L.—The flowering and leafy stems of this plant have been recently offered, unmixed and neatly baled, on the American markets as "flowering" Scoparius—Cytissus Scoparius (L.) Link. When baled, Genista bears a superficial resemblance to the official Scoparius; however, the purchaser who accepts it as such is certainly a very careless or incompetent inspector of drugs. The botanical characters of the two are too well known to need mention here. Medicinally they are unrelated.

RHIZOME AND STIPES OF FERN—SPECIES UNDETERMINED—are frequently offered for the official *male fern* or *Aspidium*. The official drug should consist of the recent rhizomes and stipes of *Dryopteris Filix-mas* (L.) Schott, and *D. marginalis* (L.) Gray, deprived of all non-green tissues. The spurious rhizome is smaller and structurally very unlike the true drug. It has never been observed in the recent state by the writer; contains practically no extractives, and may be regarded as worthless. So far, neither its geographical nor its botanical source has been learned. At times the market offerings would indicate that it constitutes about one-half of the available supply of so-called male fern.

* An examination of the authorities disclosed but one reference to it as an adulterant: "Do not confuse with Scoparius."—King's Am. Disp., Revision by Lloyd and Felter.