

The liquid opodeldoc is prepared by taking 2 ounces Castile soap shavings, and dissolving them in one quart alcohol, with gentle heat, then add 1 ounce camphor, 1/2 ounce oil rosemary, and 2 ounces spirits hartshorn (aqua ammonia) For cure of rheumatism, we advise consultation with physician. It is impossible to recommend any prescription without first seeing the patient.

(3) G. A. S. asks what he can use to remove varnish and paint from wood. A. We would recommend you to use a solution of caustic soda. It is applied with a brush made of bristles, and after a while is rinsed off with water. This operation is repeated several times, according to the thickness of the paint. Some caution is necessary to prevent the wood checking. By this means the wood is restored to its natural color.

(4) H. C. asks for any apparatus or dialyzer by which alkali and silica in solution (solution of silicate of soda) can be separated in large quantities, retaining the alkali in solution in one vessel and the silica in solution in another. A. We do not remember any mechanical apparatus by which the silica can be separated from the waterglass. Chemically, however, that is, by the addition of alkaline carbonates or chlorides, the silica will be thrown down.

(5) M. M. W.—On page 2499 of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT, No. 157, several recipes for indestructible inks are given, either of which will probably meet your demands. The majority of inks contain glycerine, the tendency of which is to prevent their perfect drying, and hence the blurring to which you allude.

(6) G. K. G. asks: What will remove red ink from a ledger without defacing the writing? A. SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT, No. 157, recommends cold aqueous or acetic acid solution of calcium hypochlorite, bleaching powder, or eau de javelle; in fact, any bleaching agent ought to accomplish the object.

(7) B. S. H. asks for preparation by which steam laundries make their goods so stiff and give such a glaze to them, especially collars and cuffs? A. This is given in full in answer 2, in SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN of May 26, 1883. 2. Please give formula for good cologne. A. Take of pure 95 per cent cologne spirits 6 gallons, oil of neroli 4 ounces, oil of rosemary 2 ounces, oil of orange 5 ounces, oil of citron 5 ounces, oil of bergamot 2 ounces; agitate; then allow to stand for a few days perfectly quiet before bottling. 3. What is the use of gold chloride in photography; otherwise, what good does toning do a picture, and what is it for? A. Gold chloride is used to tone the picture, that is, to soften the harsh effects produced by the direct action of the sun.

(8) C. A. B. writes: I am desirous of becoming a mechanical engineer, and having mastered mathematics through calculus, would like to know what books would be required? A. We give the names of some of the works studied in our schools of technology, but we think you would find it very difficult to master them without supplementary instruction: Elementary Mechanics, by De Volson Wood. The Materials of Engineering, 2 vols., R. H. Thurston. Mechanics of Engineering, J. Weistach. Machinery and Millwork. Steam Engine and other Prime Movers, by J. W. McQ. Bankine. Roofs and Bridges, De V. Wood. Civil Engineering, Wheeler. Metallurgy, "Science Series," Bixam. Elements of Machine Design, Unwin. Steam Engine, Proportion of, W. D. Marks. Elementary Quantitative Analysis, Elliot & Storer. Elementary Quantitative Analysis, Thorpe. Steam Engine, Arthur Rigg. Catechism of the Locomotive, Forney. Haswell, Engineer's Pocketbook. Moleworth, Engineer's Pocketbook. Trantwine, C. E. Pocketbook. Ganot's Physics, Atkinson.

(9) J. B. F. asks: 1. Ought steam pipes to leak at all if properly put up and the valves kept constantly packed and in good order? A. No. 2. Could the turning of steam on to a line of pipes when the return valve is closed start a leak or burst the pipes? A. It should not.

(10) M. & Co. ask what are the best proportions of tin, antimony, and copper for genuine Babbitt metal. Are the different proportions of these metals used according to the different speeds required? A. Genuine Babbitt metal, according to the formula of the inventor, is 9 of tin and 1 of copper. Antimony has been added since, so that the proportions by hundreds will stand 80 tin, 5 copper, 15 antimony. For high speeds the metals should be cooler, giving a larger proportion of tin; for weight the metal should be harder, giving a larger proportion of antimony.

(11) E. C. asks how to clarify or filter cod liver oil? A. Filter the oil through charcoal in a linen or felt filter.

(12) H. W. writes: The other day I accidentally got some quicksilver on a large gold ring, and am unable to remove it. A. We fear that the mercury has become amalgamated with the gold, in which case it will be necessary to treat the ring with chemical reagents. It is possible that you may remove some of the mercury by heating the ring as hot as possible without melting, thereby causing the mercury to volatilize.

(13) J. W. S. writes: 1. A mischievous boy has daubed my blackboard with candle grease. It does not wash off with soap or soda. What solvent would you recommend? A. If the candle is made of paraffine, hot oil of turpentine will dissolve it. Ether will also be found to be a good solvent. 2. How may I make an automatic blow pipe to use in blowing glass? I cannot blow the flame and glass too. A. Connect the end of the blow pipe with bellows by means of rubber tubing.

(14) A. G. W. asks if there is any preparation for making the hair white without injuring the hair or scalp? A. Peroxide of hydrogen will take the coloring material entirely out of hair. See description of this important bleaching agent in SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT, No. 339. No injury attends its employment.

(15) E. B. S. asks the horse power of an engine as follows, viz.: Diameter of cylinder, 9 in.; length

of stroke, 12 in.; revolutions per minute, 150; pressure of steam (in boiler), 60 pounds; cut off at 9 in.; mean effective pressure, 58 pounds? A. About twenty-five horse power. 2. The means by which the power is obtained? A. See rule in SUPPLEMENT, No. 253.

(16) J. R. D. asks: What lacquer is used by makers of chandeliers that makes them look so bright and like real brass? A. Take two gallons spirits of wine, one pound dragon's blood, three pounds Spanish annatto, four and a half pounds gum sanarae, two pints turpentine. Digest for a week, shake frequently, decant, and filter.

(17) P. & Co. ask: What are the compositions used in making the slip for the inside of pippins? A. The following is a white glaze suitable for earthen ware. An intimate mixture of massicot, 4 parts; tin ashes, 2 parts; crystal glass fragments, 3 parts; and 1/4 part sea salt. This mixture is melted, and the liquid flux used.

(18) W. L. C. asks for a formula for correcting the taste of rancid butter? A. The rancidity is due to butyric acid, a substance freely soluble in water or fresh milk, so that the butter can be thoroughly washed, first with good new milk and then with cold spring water; or the butter can be melted in water, which will dissolve out the butyric acid, and then work it over.

(19) J. F. writes: I have some wrought iron bars which I wish to nickel plate, but from some cause unknown to me I have been unable to plate them so as to keep bright in the open air. How shall I remedy this? A. The difficulty is due to the oxidation of the iron, the adhesion of the nickel not being as satisfactory as if the iron were first copper plated and then coated with nickel; or even better still would be to first coat the iron with copper, then tin, and finally with nickel.

(20) L. S. asks (1) the best and cheapest way to construct a furnace for melting brass and cast iron for casting small articles. A. You may melt 5 pounds of brass or cast iron in a forge by building a small well of fire bricks around the tuyere, about 16 inches high, 12 inches diameter, and melt in a crucible with a charcoal fire; put a large piece of charcoal over the crucible to keep the heat in. 2. Do you think it at all probable that bills now pending, as regards patents, will become laws? A. Time alone can divulge what action our erratic Congress may take as regards the patent laws. 3. Do you think the new form of steel mentioned in SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN of 8th ult., page 151, column three, will soon be introduced in United States? A. We have had inquiries concerning the steel castings you mentioned from our own manufacturers, and we presume that experiments in that line are already being made in this country. If the new steel is found upon trial to be useful for its price, it will no doubt be largely used.

(21) W. W. asks: 1. Why is it that the rule for finding the traction of locomotives only takes note of one cylinder? A. We have seen no rule that takes note of but one cylinder; if you can refer to such a rule, perhaps we shall be able to explain it. 2. What is the cause of water flowing in gushes from an underground flume? Would several different angles of inclination cause it? A. Could not say without examination. Very likely, because of commingling with the current. 3. If the velocity of water falling free from a height of 16 ft. is about 32 ft. per second, what would be the velocity at the small end of a properly constructed cone under the same head of water? A. The velocity will be less under the conditions you name, but we cannot tell exactly how much, since you do not state explicitly all the aspects of the problem.

(22) R. C. asks best receipt for cleaning spots or stains from his English tile. A. This depends upon the nature of the stain forming the spot. Naturally they must be removed by some solvent which will dissolve them without affecting the tile. Water, alcohol, ammonia, caustic alkalies, and even acids will hardly have any effect upon the porcelain surface of tiles.

(23) B. S. H.—Of course trotting at a high rate of speed is an artificial gait for a horse, but we believe that trotting is the natural intermediate gait between walking and cantering. There is nothing in the anatomy of the horse that renders trotting unnatural or awkward. The yearling at the side of its dam takes as naturally to trotting as it does to cantering.

(24) S. A. H. writes: I should like to ask if salt in some form is not necessary to the maintenance of the human system. A. Salt (chloride of sodium) is believed to be necessary to the health of the human system. But probably no such extensive and habitual use of it as civilized people indulge in is essential. It is well known that the Maori, aborigines of New Zealand, a strong and hardy race, do not use salt.

(25) J. P. McD. asks: 1. What animal has the finest hearing, and its cause? A. Nothing is certainly known as to the absolute superiority of any species of animals in this respect. That many mammals possess a very keen sense of hearing, and detect sounds, inaudible to human ears, is unquestioned. The common cat in an alert state has a very sharp and accurate ear, also the barn owl. The bats have extremely sensitive auditory nerves, detecting the almost noiseless rush of insects through the air. Perhaps the best equipped animals with this sense are the group of foxes known as Feneks, or desert foxes, of Africa, of which *Canis zerba*, the desert fox, is a typical example. It has large ears and nervous concentration when aroused. In regard to the cause, it may be generally said that the acuteness of a sense is conditioned largely upon its usefulness in the animal's economy. Hunting animals have necessarily a better sense of hearing than those whose prey is more easily obtained. Again *per contra*, timid, defenseless animals, as the hares, have trained ears because they subserv to them the purpose of protectors. Also the size of the external ear is a fair index of the provisions supplied in this sense for the animal. All animals, says Brehm, which have large, erect, and easily moved ears hear better than those whose auditory apparatus is small, dependent, and sluggish. 2. Is not perfection in nervous

force and physical development more nearly attained in the tropics than elsewhere? A. This may be answered with some reservations, yes, though some definitions of nervous force might modify this considerably.

(26) A. G. asks: 1. How is gold lettering put on the backs of books, and what composition is used to make the gold leaf stick? A. Gold letters are printed or pressed on book bindings by means of an albuminous size—white of eggs—the gold leaf placed on the size and the block of type heated and pressed on the gold leaf. 2. How is gold printing done on cards and paper? A. Gold printing on paper is printing with a size sold as "gold size" and dusting with bronze powder.

(27) F. O. asks how to give brass the beautiful iridescent colors. A. By referring to the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN of December 1, answer 14, the process of obtaining the iridescent colors will be found. The antique or very old brass color is probably the result of some lacquer whose composition is not generally known. The bright gold finish on brass is, if not the result of polishing, apt to be produced by some lacquer, such as the following: Seed lac, 3 ounces, turmeric 1 ounce, dragon's blood 1/4 ounce, alcohol 1 pint. Digest for a week, frequently shaking, decant, and filter.

(28) L. P. V. asks if a refracting telescope can be rendered as perfectly free from chromatic and spherical aberration on the dialytic plan as by the common method where the crown and flint lenses are in contact, or nearly so? And, if so, why are not the larger astronomical telescopes so constructed, thus saving thousands of dollars in the cost of the flint lens, besides actually shortening the length of tube for a given focal distance? A. The dialytic telescope cannot be made as perfect as those corrected at the object glass. This is the reason they are but little known. The field is not as large, and the definition is only good in the center.

(29) M. E. E. asks for a recipe for making water colors, such as are used for coloring photographs. A. The articles referred to are presumably nothing but aniline colors. So that you can purchase the desired color or shade of aniline you desire, dissolve it in water or alcohol according as to which is the proper solvent, and you will have the color precisely identical to the variety possessing the fanciful name. 2. Can you tell me of any way in which tar can be rendered more palatable to the taste, when taken as a medicine? Macerate tar in eight times its weight of alcohol until completely dissolved, then add a suitable flavoring compound, such as oil of wintergreen.

(30) G. J. G. writes: If two ten horse power engines were running 100 revolutions per minute, one with 48 inch pulley on crank shaft driving on to a 24 inch pulley on counter shaft, the other with 24 inch pulley on crank shaft driving on to a 24 inch pulley on counter shaft, both using 4 inch belt and same distance from center to center of each shaft, which counter shaft will require the most amount of power to stop in the same length of time? A. One-half the power only is applied in the second case to the counter shaft will be required in the first case.

(31) H. B. A. asks: Will oil spread over tubes in boiler after cleaning prevent its scaling? A. No, but for a short time it may prevent the scale adhering.

(32) A. McL., Jr., asks how litmus is thoroughly dissolved. A. The preparation of litmus is as follows: The ground lichens are first treated with urine containing a little potash, and allowed to ferment for several weeks, whereby they produce a purple red; the colored liquor, treated with quick lime and some more urine, is again set to ferment during two or three weeks; then it is mixed with chalk or gypsum into a paste which is formed into small cubical pieces by being pressed into brass moulds and dried in the shape. Litmus is easy to pulverize, is partially soluble in water and dilute alcohol, leaving a residue consisting of calcium carbonate, silica, gypsum, and iron oxide combined with the dye. This residue is not soluble unless by treatment with acids, which would interfere with the action of the litmus. For making litmus paper an infusion of one ounce of litmus to half a pint of hot water is recommended by Faraday.

(33) J. B. R. asks: 1. Is the pressure the same on the bottom of a boiler as on the top? If there is any difference, please tell me which has the greatest, and what is the difference? A. The greatest pressure is at the bottom, as you have there the weight of the water in addition to the pressure of steam. 2. How high will a good jet throw water with 100 pounds steam? A. We cannot say, as it depends on other things than merely the pressure, viz., length, kind and size of pipe, diameter and shape of nozzle. 3. How high will a siphon lift water or oil with one hundred feet fall? With two hundred feet fall? A. A siphon cannot lift water more than 26 or 28 feet, and even then there must not be any air leaks; we think not more than 18 or 20 feet can be depended upon in ordinary work. 4. When a locomotive is going down grade with her engines reversed for the purpose of holding back, where does she exhaust her steam? A. Whether going ahead or back, it must exhaust through the pipe to chimney.

(34) H. N. P. asks how the cement composed of equal parts of pitch, gutta percha, and shellac is made. A. Fuse together the gutta percha and the pitch, then add the shellac, or else dissolve the mixture in carbon disulphide.

(35) J. B. W. asks: How shall I mix wax and gutta percha? A. By dissolving them in coal tar, naphtha, carbon disulphide, or like solvents.

(36) J. M. asks how to make powdered manganese into blocks for Leclanche batteries. A. Manganese dioxide is mixed in nearly equal parts with carbon, but with the addition of a small quantity—5 per cent—of resin for the purpose of giving consistency to the mass. These three substances, properly pulverized and intimately mixed, are conglomerated under a considerable pressure, and at a temperature of 212° Fah., into a solid cylinder. A small cylinder of sodium

bisulphate is also inserted in the center of the carbon and manganese electrode while it is being moulded.

(37) J. K. M.—The composition used for picture frame ornaments is elastic, for fitting to uneven surfaces while fresh, and dries hard. If for outside work they should be thoroughly oiled with linseed oil upon the backs when applied, using nails and no glue. This composition is made like putty and of the same material, only worked up hard and moulded with a press.

MINERALS, ETC.—Specimens have been received from the following correspondents, and examined, with the results stated:

Mrs. B. W. A.—The specimen is an iron ore—hematite (sesquioxide of iron).

INDEX OF INVENTIONS

For which Letters Patent of the United States were Granted

April 15, 1884,

AND EACH BEARING THAT DATE.

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