

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## CONSTITUTION OF ANOLOBINE

IN a previous communication<sup>1</sup> the synthesis of *dl*-2, methoxy-5, 6, methylene dioxy- nor-aporphine was announced. Since then small amounts of anolobine (60 mg.) and anolobine O-methyl ether (30 mg.) have been received from Dr. Manske of the National Research Laboratories, Canada. The synthetic base being racemic was unsuitable for direct comparison with anolobine O-methyl ether which is lævoptatory. Racemisation of the natural alkaloid was not feasible as the amount available was too small for the process to be successfully carried out. The yield of *dl*-2, methoxy-5, 6, methylene dioxy- nor-aporphine from 2, amino-5 methoxy-6, 7, methylene dioxy, 1, 2, 3, 4, tetrahydro-isoquinoline through the Pschorr reaction was only about 5 per cent, and a sufficient amount of the aporphine could not therefore be accumulated to attempt a resolution of the optically inactive synthetic base.

Recourse was therefore had to the elegant method of Gadamer<sup>3</sup> in which, by treating both the synthetic and the natural bases with ethyl chloro-carbonate and alkali, products were obtained in which the nitrogen ring was cleaved and the centre of asymmetry destroyed. Both these products, being optically inactive, become comparable.

The synthetic base on treatment with ethyl chloro-carbonate and alkali yielded a solid

which, after two crystallisations from alcohol and a third from 50 per cent acetic acid, melted at 169-170° C. (Prisms).

By a similar treatment with ethyl chloro-carbonate and alkali, Manske's anolobine O-methyl ether yielded a solid which, after three crystallisations (the last from 50 per cent acetic acid), melted at 245-247° C. (colourless sheaves of long needles).

The two products when mixed melted to a clear liquid between 220-230° C. after shrinking to a tiny dot at 160° C.

It appears therefore that anolobine cannot be represented by the structure assigned to it by Manske.<sup>2</sup>

My grateful thanks are due to Dr. Manske for his gift of anolobine and anolobine O-methyl ether and to Professor B. B. Dey for his guidance and keen interest in the work. Full details of this investigation will be published in due course elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> Govindachari, *Curr. Sci.*, 1941, 10, 76.

<sup>2</sup> Manske, *Can. J. Res.*, 1938, 16, 76.

<sup>3</sup> Gadamer, *Arch. Pharm.*, 259, 146.