

## Contributed and Selected



GUSTAV LUDWIG RAMSPERGER.

The applause and honors that are bestowed by the public on men of prominence are not always justly divided, and many a man is raised to a high place of admiration during his lifetime, who hardly deserves such distinction, only to be soon forgotten after his death. The large and unthinking crowd will always be caught by men of daring deeds, of flattering words, of brazen appearance. Men that excel in warfare or showy enterprises, orators that catch their audience by smooth or bold phrases, or those who are endowed with a wonderful voice or other natural gifts, will receive the largest share of public applause; while the quiet thinker, the man who modestly works out hard problems of science or art to the benefit of thousands, the man of stern honor and strict adherence to his duty, no matter how arduous it is, will hardly be noticed.

These thoughts are not new, but they are apt to rise in our minds when we undertake to pay tribute to a dear friend who has stood before us during his whole life as a shining but modest, example and faithful worker, for the good and the

true in our profession. When, about six months ago, Gustav Ludwig Ramsperger, at the occasion of the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the German Apotheker Verein, sat next to me, and I had the honor and pleasure of introducing this venerable Nestor of pharmacy to the large audience of his fellow workers, scarcely anybody thought that this would be actually the last appearance among his colleagues. The sweet and cheerful words that he delivered that evening still resound in our hearts and we can hardly realize that this man, whom we were wont to see among us at all festive occasions, will never return. With him the last founder of the German Apotheker Verein, the oldest pharmaceutical association of this country, has passed away, and we might almost say that with him a chapter in the history of American pharmacy has closed. For he represented a time that now lies behind us, that many of us only know from the sayings of older men. New ideas, new commercial conditions prevail today, and many of the old men of thirty and forty—even of fifty years ago—are hardly able to understand this change of conditions. But our friend Ramsperger, though old in years, remained young in heart, and to the very last day of his life he understood and grasped the advances of his profession and took an active part in every development of his calling. He did this to such an extent that in the minds of nearly all of us he does not live as an old man of eighty-eight years, but rather as a vigorous man who works with us, who has been doing this for half a century, and has kept pace in the foremost ranks of his fellow workers.

Let me in a few words tell the history of his life. Gustav Ludwig Ramsperger was born the 13th of December, 1824, as the son of a public school teacher in Herrenburg, Würtemberg. He received his first instruction in the high school of Ulm, and entered at the age of fourteen years the pharmacy of his uncle Berg, in Winnenden, as apprentice. In those days the position of apprentice in a German "apotheke" meant more than we can understand in this country. It was really a practical continuation of the schooling. The proprietor took an interest in his apprentices and gave them regular systematic instruction. They had to perform every part of the work of a pharmacy in a systematic way, never being allowed to pass on to a new work until the previous one had been thoroughly mastered. The apprentices, far from receiving a salary, paid for this instruction, and the time of apprenticeship varied from two to four years in different parts of Germany. At the end of his apprenticeship, Ramsperger passed his examination as assistant and spent a number of years in other parts of Germany and also in Switzerland, where he pursued his studies of French to such an extent that even in his old age he was perfectly conversant with that language. In 1849 he went to the University of Tübingen to finish his studies and to prepare himself for the final examination (Staatsexamen), which he passed successfully in the year 1850. His favorite study was botany, and he had a wonderful memory for the names of plants, and could name their German, French, English, Latin, and pharmaceutical names with equal ease. This memory did not leave him, even in his advanced age.

After passing his final examination Ramsperger left Germany in 1850 and emigrated to America, hoping to find a greater field for his enterprise and ability. Before leaving, however, he married Miss Leonore Wiedersheim, the daughter of a pastor, so that his journey to America was really his wedding trip. There never

was a better mated couple and those who have met Mr. and Mrs. Ramsperger will remember the sweetness and gentleness which characterized them both, until about eight years ago death separated them. Soon after his arrival in New York Gustav Ramsperger acquired a small drug store in Oliver Street, which at that time was right in the business center of New York. His good judgment, his thorough knowledge of all parts of his profession, his amiable manners, and the ease with which he made friends, soon made him the leading pharmacist in his vicinity and his business was one of the most flourishing in New York. He stayed in Oliver Street for sixteen years, when the shifting of the business center and the residential part of the city made it advisable to move further uptown. He bought the share of his friend Faber, in the Faber-Balluff pharmacy, on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Thirty-eighth Street, and was equally successful in this new location. Having acquired a small fortune, Ramsperger thought of retiring, sold out his interest in the pharmacy and for some time devoted his energy to scientific work. But feeling that he was too young for permanent retirement, he again acquired a pharmacy in Brooklyn, at the corner of Fulton and Cumberland streets. Here he stayed a number of years, until, at his sixtieth birthday, he definitely retired from business. Since that day until his death he engaged in scientific and literary pursuits, and was active in a great many chemical and pharmaceutical societies as member and officer.

But the accumulation of a competency was not the sole object of his life. He came to this country not only to be independent and, if possible, to make money; he kept the ideals of his youth as a sacred gift and allowed them to influence him in his actions during his whole life. When he started in business and bought the "Doctor-shop," as it was called at that time, he did not forget the respected position that the German "Apotheker" has among his fellow citizens, and he at once made it one of the objects of his life to help raise the status of pharmacy and eliminate therefrom the foreign and improper belongings. He was fortunate enough to find many companions in this work, men who were inspired like himself, who had also left Germany displeased with the reaction after the great year of the revolution in 1848, and were looking for a broader and better field of usefulness. We must not underrate the spirit of the men of those days. They were really pioneers, they came to this country, not as adventurers, or because they were tired of steady work. They came here instigated by a high and noble ideal, men full of broadness, full of vigor, possessed of high education and ready to give to this country the best that men can bring. It was this spirit that brought men like Carl Schurz, Kudlich, Dr. Abraham Jacobi, Hugo Wesendonk, and others to America. Whatever they undertook was free from selfishness, free from smallness, and their influence was destined to be felt to the good of the country. Animated by such noble incentives Ramsperger and his friends founded the new society which during his whole life remained his favorite work, and for which he has done so much. In the many ups and downs of the Apotheker-Verein Ramsperger always stood firm and lived up to his ideal. He was always in the front ranks wherever pharmaceutical education and dignity were to be advanced. It is easily understood that a man of such inclinations would branch out and not remain within the limits of his home. So he became a charter member of the

New York State Pharmaceutical Association, was a member of the American Pharmaceutical Association, joined the New York College of Pharmacy and acted for a number of years as officer and trustee, his services finally being recognized by giving him the title of honorary vice-president. But while he devoted his principal energies to his profession, and lived for pharmacy, he did not forget other educational enterprises. His love for plants made him join the Torrey Botanical Club, and he was actively engaged in the founding and development of the New York Botanical Gardens. A very extensive and scientific collection of medicinal plants that he made during his life is now a part of the collection of the Botanical Gardens. He was also a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and of the Museum of Natural History, besides belonging to a number of German literary and social associations. His charitable inclinations and warm heart for the welfare of his fellow men can best be shown by the fact that he belonged to twenty charitable societies, worked in all of them, and was president of several of them. And while he was liberal in sharing his earthly possessions with others, the leading trait of his character was his unpretentiousness and modesty, so that even in later years he would not leave the small residence in which he had lived so long, thinking it was good enough for him, until his children, by a ruse, made him leave it for more commodious quarters.

A man of such broad activity in his own profession, of such lively interests for the welfare of others, could not help being noticed and respected all over the country. Thus it was with Gustav Ramsperger. To know him was to love him. Those of us who were regular attendants of the meetings of the American Pharmaceutical Association will recall that in all the little excursions that were made through the country, where plants or flowers were to be found, Ramsperger was always surrounded by a circle of inquiring friends. He knew every plant, he knew the history of every plant, he knew everything that could be known about the plant, and the older of us will also recall that another respected German, a type similar to Ramsperger, Professor Maisch, of Philadelphia, was generally with him at such occasions, and the two were good and dear friends. Of Ramsperger it may be said that he had no enemies. His amiable disposition, his smiling eyes, his cheerful words, always acted as a soothing balsam on unruly spirits. He could not say a harsh word to anybody. He never offended anyone, and if he took a dislike to anyone, he simply avoided him. Thus he stands before us, one of the leaders of our profession, and it may well be worth while to put the example of his life before the younger generation, who often believe that the accumulation of money alone stands for success. Ramsperger's life was a shining example of a great man of his profession, not in the sense of glittering and boasting, but in the sense that the greatest man is he who does the greatest good to his fellow men.

He was a typical American of German birth, of the best calibre. While he remained a German in many of his ways, and preferred to speak German to any other language, and was proud of being a German, still he was thoroughly American, and understood the customs and laws of this country in a noble and ideal way. He was an American not by birth, which often means by accident, but by choice, he loved the country to which he emigrated and was proud to be a good and useful citizen. Therefore he kept all that was good, all that was true of his Fatherland, and brought it with him to this country as a valuable treasure and

gave this treasure to his new country in exchange for liberty and independence that he found here. The devotion to his work, his strong vigor in doing the right thing at the right time, the love for art and science, these were the treasures that he brought with him from Germany and distributed here freely. During the many years of his activity, this virility, this energy and endurance, was the most remarkable trait of his individuality. He seemed never to be tired. He could work for twenty-four hours a day and still be as cheerful and vigorous as when he began, and this power of endurance stayed with him. When in his eightieth year, he took a trip to the Orient in company with a great many others, it was Ramsperger who in Egypt, in Syria, in Palestine, was always at the head of the procession. He took all the little side trips that others only half as old would not undertake for fear of fatigue, and not satisfied with this, he would occasionally sit down and write long reports on his journey which, having been collected afterwards by his son, formed a wonderful narrative of this trip.

Thus Gustav Ludwig Ramsperger will remain in our memory as a noble representative of our profession, every inch a man, without boasting, without advertising, always cheerful, always willing to work, steadfast and true to his better self, respected and beloved by all who knew him.

WILLIAM C. ALPERS.

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### COMMERCIAL CALCIUM GLYCEROPHOSPHATE.

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W. A. PUCKNER AND L. E. WARREN.

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Glycerophosphoric acid and several of its salts were prepared by Pelouze<sup>1</sup> as early as 1845 while studying the constitution of glycerol. He produced the acid by heating glycerol with phosphoric acid and also with phosphoric anhydride. From the acid the barium and the calcium salts were prepared and the formula  $2\text{CaO} \cdot \text{C}_3\text{H}_7\text{O}_5\text{PO}_3$  (old atomic weights) assigned to the latter. Pelouze reported that the calcium salt was less soluble in hot water than in cold. Soon after the synthesis of glycerophosphoric acid by Pelouze, it was obtained by Gobley<sup>2</sup> from egg lecithin by decomposing this substance with acids. Subsequently Liebrich<sup>3</sup> discovered it in diseased brain tissue and in later time it has been found in a variety of animal tissues and excretions.

In 1876 Thudichum and Kingzett<sup>4</sup> prepared several salts of glycerophosphoric acid from the acid obtained from the brain. They prepared the anhydrous calcium salt, ignited it and weighed the calcium pyrophosphate formed. From the results of these and of elementary analyses of the salt they assigned to it the formula,  $\text{CaC}_3\text{H}_7\text{O}_6\text{P}$ . They also prepared an acid calcium salt from the same source, the formula of which they believed to be  $\text{CaC}_3\text{H}_7\text{O}_6\text{P} \cdot \text{H}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}_7\text{O}_3\text{P}$ . In addition to the calcium salt they prepared the barium and lead salts but could not obtain

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<sup>1</sup>Compt. rend., 21, 718 (1845).

<sup>2</sup>J. pharm. chim. [3], 9, 161 (1846).

<sup>3</sup>Annal. Chem. Pharm., 134, 29 (1865).

<sup>4</sup>J. Chem. Soc., 30, 20 (1876).