

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS.

Applications for the positions of chemist, and senior, associate and assistant chemists must be on file with the U. S. Civil Service Commission at Washington, D. C., not later than April 8, 1935.

The entrance salaries range from \$2600.00 to \$4600.00 a year, less a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent retirement deduction.

In each of the grades, separate lists of eligibles will be established in accordance with the specialized qualifications shown by applicants. A number of existing vacancies in the Food and Drug Administration, Department of Agriculture, in all grades will be filled from these examinations, as well as a vacancy in the grade of assistant chemist in the Dental Alloy Laboratory, National Bureau of Standards, Department of Commerce.

Full information may be obtained from the Secretary of the United States Civil Service Board of Examiners at the post-office or custom-house in any city which has a post-office of the first or the second class, or from the United States Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.

### THE TERCENTENARY OF CHEMISTRY.

"Dr. C. A. Browne, chief of chemical and technological research of the United States Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, has officially established 1635 as the date of the birth of American chemical work. Then John Winthrop, Jr., founded the industries that are now so vital to national defense and form so large a source of national wealth.

"At a tercentenary celebration of the American Chemical Society the memory and the vision of this great colonist will be honored when the history of the birth of chemistry in this country, compiled by Dr. Browne, will be read."

In 1642, the General Court of Massachusetts passed an order to raise and produce materials for making gunpowder. Winthrop planned for the production of salt, glass potash, saltpeter, medicines, alum and other materials.

### DRUGS FROM AUTOMATIC MACHINES.

An amendment to the Food and Drugs Act Bill of Australia provides that no person shall (a) Install any automatic machine for the sale or supply of any drug or medicine; (b) permit any such automatic machine to be installed;

(c) sell or supply any drug or medicine by means of any automatic machine. "Automatic machine" means any machine or mechanical device used or capable of being used for the purpose of selling or supplying goods without the personal manipulation or attention of the seller or supplier or his servant or agent at the time of the sale or supply. Among the reasons given for the clause were the following: 1. The accessibility of the machines to children and young people. 2. The fact that they provide an uncontrolled means of disposing of dangerous drugs. 3. The danger of manipulation, whereby a noxious drug may be substituted in place of the original packet. 4. The fact that the use of the machines leads to the distribution of habit-forming drugs in small quantities, e. g., three tablets for a penny and twelve for threepence. 5. The difficulty of control under the laws relating to poisons and early closing.

### A PLAY BASED ON THE LIFE OF SEMMELWEIS.

In Vienna, a play has been produced with the title, "Dr. Semmelweis," from the pen of Hans Refisch. (See *Journal of the A. M. A.*, February 23, 1935.) "The plot was taken from the life of the immortal physician. The drama deals with his struggles and the misjudgment of him by his colleagues. This drama has been produced only in Vienna, which failed to appreciate Semmelweis, seeing in this benefactor of humanity only a charlatan and driving him away. The play as a literary work is not well done, because it consists of long dialogs and tedious scientific disputes. Nevertheless the audience liked it. The leading literary reviews of western Europe have dealt with it meritoriously." See editorial, *JOURNAL A. PH. A.*, 6, 341 (1917). Also pages 351 and 382 same issue.

The press has reported the finding of twelve pieces of broken pottery on the site of ancient Lachisch (one of the capitals of the Canaanites). Dr. J. L. Starkey, head of the *Wellcome Archaeological Research Expedition*, who found the potsherds, entrusted the task of deciphering the inscriptions to Prof. Torczynyer at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. According to the latter this is a most remarkable find; a remarkable fact is that they appear to be written in ordinary ink.