

## EDITORIAL NOTES

Editor: E. G. EBERLE, Bourse Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

Committee on Publication: J. W. ENGLAND, *Chairman*; G. M. BERINGER, E. FULLERTON COOK, H. B. MASON, F. J. WULLING, and the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, General Secretary, Treasurer and Reporter on the Progress of Pharmacy, *ex-officio*.

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### AGE LIMIT WILL NOT BAR HOSPITAL STEWARDS FROM THE EXAMINATIONS FOR PHARMACISTS IN THE U. S. NAVY.

That the influence of the American Pharmaceutical Association is helpful and that the high aims of this organization are recognized, was evidenced in the successful effort resulting in removing the age limit, which debarred hospital stewards, who had done service for years in these positions, from advancement. The Bureau of Navigation in the Navy Department had issued an order that no one should be eligible as pharmacist, who was over 35 years of age. Before this order went into effect hospital stewards of long service were permitted to come up for examination when vacancies occurred in the ranks of pharmacists or when there were additional appointments to be made.

In the reorganization additional pharmacists are required, and the injustice became apparent to Secretary Wm. B. Day, who directed the attention of Chairman S. L. Hilton, of the Committee on the Status of Pharmacists in the Government Service, to this situation. Mr. Hilton called at the Navy Department and was accorded a hearing by the Chief Clerk of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and also by the Chief of the Bureau. Mr. Hilton in speaking for the Association apprised them of the deep interest this organization had in seeing good men in service and also pointed out the injustice to those who had done faithful service as hospital stewards, by eliminating them on account of age. That such action would keep capable men from enlisting, if there was no higher position attainable.

The Chief of the Bureau expressed his pleasure because the Association was interested and took the question up with the Secretary of the Navy, and as a result an order was issued striking out the age limit.

Chairman Hilton several days thereafter called on Secretary Daniels of the Navy and extended thanks on behalf of the American Pharmaceutical Association; the secretary replied that he was glad to receive a representative of the Association and had great pleasure in correcting the injustice. During the conversation Secretary Daniels stated that in his younger days he spent several years in the drug business. He expressed himself regarding the hospital stewards, by saying that they were efficient and reflected credit on themselves and the Service.

Chairman Hilton desires that the members of the Association learn of the cordial reception given him, and also of the high regard in which the hospital stewards and pharmacists are held by the Department.

The grade of Pharmacist carries a commission; about 30 more will be added to the list, and the hospital stewards will have an opportunity to qualify by examination.

The work of the Association is not without its rewards and this recognition means more to pharmacy than simply the success provided for this limited number of pharmacists.

### PROFESSOR ELIE METCHNIKOFF.

Professor Elie (Iliya) Metchnikoff's discovery that phagocytes destroy the disease germs and protect injuries against malignant bacteria, and therefore the utility of the process of inflammation, established his place as one of the world's greatest scientists. As with many other men of science, some of his investigations were not comprehended by the public, who will probably always associate his name with sour milk as prolonging life, without thinking of the investigations that have to do with the theory, just as Darwin's name is associated with the descent from monkeys and Newton's with the falling apple.

Virchow discovered the leucocytes, Pasteur the microbes and Metchnikoff supplied the missing link that brought these discoveries

together, developing the modern serum therapy.

Professor Metchnikoff was born at Livanovka, a province of Kharkof, Russia, May 15, 1845, and passed out of a useful life at Paris, July 15, 1916. He graduated at Kharkof University and also studied at Giessen and Munich, and was professor of zoology at



photograph from Underwood and Underwood, N. Y.

**PROFESSOR ELIE METCHNIKOFF.**

Odessa and Petrograd. His first important discovery was made while at Messina and engaged in the investigation of the digestion of marine invertebrates. In 1888 he came to the Pasteur Institute at Paris.

Many honors were conferred on him; on his seventieth birthday he was presented with a golden book forming a unique record of the latest scientific researches, signed by the foremost modern scientists. In 1908 the Nobel Prize for medical research was divided between the late Dr. Paul Ehrlich and Prof. Metchnikoff. The \$20,000 which he thus received he devoted entirely to the furtherance of his scientific researches.

**SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY.**

The picture herewith of Sir William Ramsay was taken from a group with Dr. Rudolph Messel and Dr. William H. Nichols while in attendance at the International Congress of Chemistry, in Washington, in 1912. Sir William also visited in this country last year; he was Lovering lecturer at Johns Hopkins University.

William Ramsay was born in Glasgow, October 2, 1853; here he also received his earlier education, and while at the university was a pupil of Lord Kelvin. He attended the University of Tübingen, receiving his degree there at the age of twenty-one. For a time he was assistant professor of chemistry in Anderson College, and thereafter for six years tutorial assistant in chemistry at the



**SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY.**

University of Glasgow. In 1880 he was appointed professor of chemistry in the University College, Bristol, and thereafter came to the University of London; from this position he retired in 1913, as Professor Emeritus. He died at his home in Beechcroft, Hazlemere, Bucks, England, July 23, 1916.

A record of the passing of one of the world's eminent chemists, if not the greatest, should be made in this JOURNAL, but more than a passing notice of some of his discoveries is impossible. It may, perhaps, be said that the great scientist did not accomplish much which was of direct and immediate commercial value, but future history will more than likely tell another story. He set his brilliant mind on purely scientific results, and an unusually gifted imagination contributed largely to his achievements. His work with John William Strutt (Lord Rayleigh), professor of natural philosophy, Royal Institution, on the solution of the problem concerning the differences in the density between atmospheric nitrogen and that obtained from compounds led to the discovery of argon. His most recent achievement, that of transmutation of radium into helium, upset all former theories, may prove the interrelationship of all the elements, and has opened up a new world of research into the very atoms of elements. Deserved titles and honors were freely bestowed upon him. He was an honorary member of the British Pharmaceutical Conference.

#### TEAR-PRODUCING GASES USED IN THE WAR SAID TO BE MANUFACTURED FROM SABADILLA.

Press reports state that some of the asphyxiating gases, and more particularly the

tear-producing, are made from *sabadilla*, a plant of Venezuela and Mexico. The source is *Veratrum sabadilla* Retztus; the Spanish of *sabadilla* is *cebada*, meaning barley.

The highly poisonous seeds have long been used in medicine, and contain *cavadine*, or *veratric acid* and *sabadalline*; the effect is accelerating the heart beat. *Sabadilla* dust is a powerful, harmful irritant and laborers working with it are obliged to wear protecting masks. In Venezuela it is used by cattle raisers as an insecticide and in the manufacture of disinfectants. Its importation into Europe has been in the past for tanning fine leathers and as a mordant for dyes.

#### PRODUCTION OF ATROPINE POSSIBLE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

It has been ascertained that the plant *Datura alba*, which grows wild in abundance in every part of the Philippine Islands, contains a large amount of atropine. In some localities the plant reaches a height of 6 feet; it is not cultivated, and no use is made of it commercially. J. F. Boomer says in *Commercial Reports* that an American manufacturer, to whom samples were sent, ordered a large supply, and that in order to take care of any demand which may result will require that arrangements be made for collection of the plant or those parts of it that contain most of the alkaloid.

### OBITUARY

#### DR. WILLIAM SIMON.

"There is a remembrance of the dead to which we turn, even from the charms of the living."

Almost any tribute that might be paid Dr. William Simon, "Professor Simon," would fail to satisfy those who knew him, who were invariably those who loved him. The same tribute would undoubtedly be considered fulsome by those who had not had the good fortune to be closely associated with this unusual man. It will be safe to state, however, that there are very few who have made and left the same helpful impression upon American pharmacy and American pharmacists during the last forty years. The opportunity for this was offered during his long service as a teacher of chemistry, as ap-

plied to pharmacy, and by the extensive use of his text-book on chemistry by students of pharmacy.

Dr. William Simon, the son of the Rev. William and Agnes Briegleb Simon, was born at Eberstadt, in the Grand Duchy of Hesse, Germany, on February 20, 1844. He attended the schools of Giessen from 1852 to 1860. In the latter year, he entered a drug store and clerked in different stores until 1866. The following year, he entered the University of Giessen to study chemistry, and took his degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1869. He was assistant to Prof. H. Will at the university, 1869-1870, served in the Sanitary Corps during the Franco-Prussian war and came to Baltimore at the close of 1870, as chemist for the Baltimore Chrome Works, which position he retained for nearly thirty-