

EDITORIAL NOTES

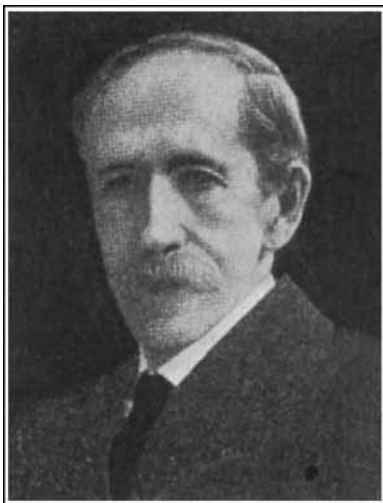
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THE CENTENARY OF CHLOROFORM— THREE CO-DISCOVERERS—LIEBIG, SOUBEIRAN AND GUTHRIE.

In the May number of the JOURNAL for 1931, page 481, appears an article on "The Centenary of the Discovery of Chloroform;" in this, Samuel Guthrie, Baron von Liebig and Eugene Soubeiran are named as co-discoverers. The



SAMUEL GUTHRIE.

reference to the *American Journal of Science and Arts* (1831), in the U. S. Dispensary, published in 1845, is of historical interest and value in connection with the records of the discovery. Guthrie supplied his product to Professor Silliman and Dr. Eli Ives; the latter

administered Guthrie's chloroform by inhalation—the first chloroform administered in that way; Simpson was the first to use chloroform in surgical practice.

This comment has been prompted by an article in the contributors' columns of our esteemed contemporary—the *Pharmazeutische Zentralhalle* of October 1, 1931, page 628, by Max Speter, on the centenary of chloroform, wherein the name of Samuel Guthrie as co-discoverer was not included. *In our opinion*—this was an inadvertent omission, and that correction will be made in a succeeding issue of the *Pharmazeutische Zentralhalle*.

Records indicate that Guthrie made chloroform ("chloric ether") not later than October 1831, probably (?) in May 1831.

Quoting Ossian Guthrie:

"My recollection in relation to the discovery of chloroform is almost as vivid as though it had occurred yesterday. On the 28th of February, 1831, I was five years old. On the 29th of April, 1831, my brother Wardell (now of this city (Chicago)) was born. At that time my father was assisting my grandfather in his laboratory and his residence was then, and had been from my earliest recollection, but a short distance away, as was also my grandfather's residence. My father's youngest sister, about four years my senior, my sister about two, and myself, had almost unrestricted privileges in the laboratory; and there, before the birth of my brother, we tasted the agreeable flavor and inhaled the never-to-be-forgotten odor of 'sweet whisky,' the local, and may I add, the spontaneous name applied to the first

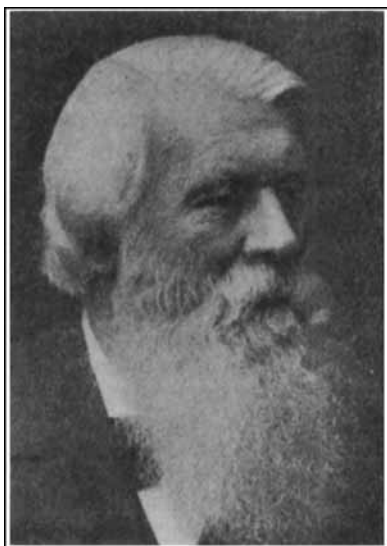
distillate ever obtained from alcohol and chloride of lime."

In a letter, Prof. William B. Day states:

"I have linked this up with a statement from E. O. Gale's 'Reminiscences of Early Chicago' in which Gale speaks of Ossian Guthrie as the son of Alfred Guthrie, one of the pioneer settlers of Chicago and states also that Alfred had two other sons named *Wardell* and Samuel. In the paragraph referred to above, Ossian refers to his brother *Wardell*. Evidently Dr. Samuel Guthrie, the discoverer of chloroform was Ossian Guthrie's grandfather."

TWO EMINENT BRITISH PHARMACISTS.

"*The Biograph* is a monthly magazine containing sketches of eminent living men selected from all ranks, conditions and opinions of mankind. The October number (1881) contains twenty-five such biographies, and we notice that we have some sort of claim to four of them. The career of Professor Atfield,



SIR JOSEPH WILSON SWAN—1828-1914.

An English pharmacist noted as a pioneer in electric carbon filament lamps.

F.R.S., who is one of the twenty-five, is very closely associated with pharmacy. . . . The sales of his "Manual of Chemistry" have reached an aggregate of 25,000 copies. Another gentleman reported on is Mr. Joseph Wilson Swan, of Newcastle, whose success as an inventor in regard to the electric light must not be allowed to eclipse the fact that

he is still, as he has been from his early days, a chemist and druggist. Mr. Swan has been at work on his lamp for more than twenty years. . . . Perhaps it is not generally known that Mr. Swan was also the inventor of the photographic printing process known as the 'autotype'; his collodion is familiar wherever photography is practised."—*The Chemist and Druggist*, October 15, 1881.

Joseph Wilson Swan was knighted in recognition of his discoveries; our records indicate that throughout life he was a pharmacist. He was a pioneer in photographic processes, electric carbon filament lamps and electrodeposition of metals.

NATIONAL PHARMACY WEEK.

Quoting the *Bulletin of Hennepin Co. Medical Society*, Minneapolis—"The average person thinks of pharmacy in terms of the average American drug store, and does not even understand a drug store. To him pharmacy is a merchandising enterprise that distributes a variegated assortment that includes medicines among other items. He does not see the ramifying and intricate processes that finally focus in the prescription room of the corner drug store. The medicine that he purchases there may have had its origin in the depths of an African forest; it may have gone through manufacturing methods requiring the utmost exactness and scientific skill; it may have been blended with other therapeutic agents by the druggist in a dispensing service that only one in every fifteen hundred persons is competent to render. But the final buyer—the layman—sees nothing of the complicated and costly procedures that led up to this purchase.

"The comic papers and the vaudeville stage are filled with jibes about the drug store and the things which can be bought there, giving a false idea of the true place of the pharmacist in the community.

"Selling other things besides drugs in a pharmacy is nothing new. Centuries ago the druggists sold sugar, confections, jellies, spices, vinegar, flavoring and what not for use in the kitchen. Out of the ancient apothecary shop came perfumes, rouges, powders and toilet lotions. Less than a century ago you would buy paints, oils, varnishes and seeds, principally, at the drug store. Soda water (carbonated water) was invented by a pharmacist, and for generations was dispensed only in drug

stores. Other merchants have taken from the drug store much more than the drug store has taken over from their lines of trade. . . ."

"The chief function of the modern drug store is the practice of professional pharmacy as it relates to the promotion of the public health. In this practice the pharmacist is concerned not only in the proper dispensing of corrective agents but also in the supplying of preventive ones such as disinfectants, germicides, bacterial vaccines and antitoxins. In the dispensing of this service he is bound by an inflexible ethical code. The pharmacist is frequently consulted by his patrons on matters of health and supplies remedies as requested for simple head colds, or acute coughs or for corns or toothache. He does not attempt to usurp the privilege of the physician because he is not fitted by education or training either to diagnose or treat disease any more than is the physician by his training fitted to compound and dispense remedial agents. Therefore, when you have recited to your druggist a list of your aches and pains, real or imaginary, and he tells you to consult your physician, he is advising you in the interest of your health. Do not attempt self diagnosis because nine times out of ten your guess is wrong.'

"The pharmacist is sometimes accused of being the physician's competitor. In almost every instance it will be found that it is the pharmacist's desire to be a collaborator with, not a competitor of, the physician in the constant fight against pain and disease.

"The apothecary, druggist, pharmacist (call him what you will), has served humanity shoulder to shoulder with the physician for more than forty centuries. He is still on the job. He is better able to give service than ever before. That diploma hanging on the wall of his shop certifies to long years of study and training, and implies that he is competent to compound and dispense medicines.

"The corner druggist is from necessity a merchant. He is also the practitioner of a profession which is very necessary to the preservation of public health and well-being. Drop into his store and become better acquainted with him."

THE HOSPITAL PHARMACY IN EGYPT.

Our fellow member (A. Ph. A.) in Egypt, Ali M. Elshaarani, writes that: "To the D. P. H. in Egypt belong 61 general hospitals, where seventy pharmacists and nine assistants serve. Of the pharmacists four are in the fifth

grade, sixty-six are in the sixth grade and all the assistants are in the seventh grade.

"During 1930, 85,311 in-patients and 2,523,928 out-patients have been treated in these hospitals.

"All the medicines, that have been used during 1930, were brought from foreign countries and have cost about 100,000 Egyptian pounds. There are four pharmacists together with eight assistants, that permanently work in the Central Drug Stores of the D. P. H., to supply the units with about 2000 different kinds of medicines. One pharmacist and two assistants in these stores dispense the already prepared medicaments, to all units of the department.

"There is an official hospital pharmacopœia, that contains together with the formulas of the usual medicines used in the government medical units, other useful scientific information. The English system and methods are followed in this pharmacopœia. The pharmacist in a government general hospital has plenty of work to do, so often he dispenses different medicines to about 500 out-patients per day. Occasionally, he is visited by an inspector.

"In Egypt, hospital pharmacy has been greatly improved and much good is expected of it in the future, through the efforts of pharmacists, care and sympathy of the chief authorities in the D. P. H."

LONDON PHARMACOPŒIAS.

Quoting an address by Prof. G. E. Gask, published in the *Journal and Pharmacist* of October 10, 1931.—"About 1670, the first of the London Hospital Pharmacopœias was produced, to be followed rapidly by others. In the early part of the eighteenth century a remarkable reformation in English pharmacy occurred. This reformation appeared between the years 1721 and 1746, which mark the publication of the fourth and fifth editions of the London Pharmacopœia. I quote now a reference to the period by Sir William Church (St. Bartholomew's Hospital Reports, 1884-1886): Pharmacy up to that date had followed the old traditional lines, which had been adhered to from the days of Hippocrates, Galen and the Arabian physicians; the learned colleges had never had the courage to break away from the superstitious element which had played so great a part in the medicine of the Dark Ages. The world in general, as well as the practitioners of the healing art, have but a very slight idea of

the debt of gratitude they owe to the committee of distinguished men appointed by the London College to prepare the fifth edition of its Pharmacopœia, for the courage they showed in sweeping away many of those inartificial and irregular mixtures which the ignorance of the first ages introduced, as well as all, or nearly all, the disgusting substances, for the most part superstitiously and dotingly derived from oracles, dreams and astrological fancies, which up to that time disfigured our Pharmacopœias."

THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM.

As an initial step in the development of the proposed national arboretum, the marshland along the Anacostia River in the outskirts of Washington, two and a half miles from Capitol Hill, is being drained by army engineers. A tract of 268 acres of land has been purchased; the physiography of the area ranges from the water gardens of Kenilworth to the wooded heights of the Hamilton and Hickory Hill tracts, which will be included in the arboretum. The two bodies of land afford the diversity of soil and physiography needed for many types of plants.

The arboretum will have laboratory facilities as well as museum characteristics. Cultivated and wild plants growing side by side, in the same type of soil and in the same climate, will be studied to aid the breeding of more valuable species.

U. S. P. REVISION NOTES.

Chairman E. Fullerton Cook reports that the annual *Proceedings* of the A. D. M. A. for 1931 has recently been issued. The Scientific Section of that Association has been giving consideration to many problems now before the Revision Committee. Chairman Paul S. Pittenger, in his address stated "I doubt if there is anything of more importance to our member firms than the adoption by the U. S. P. and N. F. Revision Committees of proper standards and analytical processes." Among the subjects of importance in U. S. P. Revision are:

Magma Magnesia.—The present U. S. P. limits for soluble alkali are too stringent. They represent practically the water solubility of magnesium hydroxide in water. The following modified test is suggested:

"Dilute 20 cc. of Magma Magnesia with distilled water that has been recently boiled and cooled to room temperature, to make 200 cc., mix thoroughly and immediately filter, discarding the first liquid that comes through the

filter. To 50 cc. of the clear filtrate, add 1 drop of phenolphthalein T. S., and titrate with tenth-normal sulphuric acid; not more than 0.4 cc. is required to discharge the red color." The determination of the amount of residue also needs revision.

Extracts of Drugs.—The relationship between an assayed extract and the drug is one point considered; tests for the absence of more than minute quantities of iron, lead or copper in preparations representing drug extraction are important. This latter problem is being studied.

The Chairman has just received a copy of the new Chinese Pharmacopœia, issued by the Ministry of Health of the National Government of the Republic of China. While printed in Chinese characters, the arrangement is alphabetical by Latin titles. No translation being available, it is impossible to make a comparison of the tests and assays but the contents indicate a consideration of the newer materia medica and also conservative therapeutic judgment.

PERSONAL AND NEWS ITEMS.

Tom Coulson, of Dallas, was the guest of honor at the meeting of Central Texas Retail Druggists' Association meeting held October 22nd at Corsicana. Cline's Collegians, named in memory of the late Prof. R. R. D. Cline (U. of Texas), furnished the musical program. President Walter D. Adams spoke on "What Organization Means to Retail Druggists."

Dr. Bernard Fantus, of Chicago, has recently been appointed professor of Therapeutics at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.

Prof. Paul Briggs has succeeded Dr. L. F. Bradley as dean of the School of Pharmacy of George Washington University. Dr. Bradley is lecturer in Commercial Pharmacy and Dr. Edward A. Krause is teaching Medical Emergencies and First Aid. Dr. S. L. Hilton is lecturing on Prescriptions, especially in connection with incompatibilities.

Dr. B. V. Christensen, professor of pharmacognosy and pharmacology at the College of Pharmacy of the University of Florida, has been elected to membership on the Committee of Revision of the United States Pharmacopœia, succeeding Dr. W. O. Richtmann, who recently resigned, because of the pressure of his university duties.

Dean Charles H. LaWall, of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, has been elected chairman of the subcommittee on vola-