

with the ethereal solution till alkaline. Separate again, distil off the ether and dry by heating for fifteen minutes on a water-bath under diminished pressure, using a capillary tube as for vacuum distillations. The residue gives, after one distillation, an almost pure malonic ester.

The sodium carbonate solution appears to contain some of the acid ester. If this solution is added to the first acid solution, the ester separates with some ether. The ethereal solution may be separated, the ether evaporated at a gentle heat, and the residue added to the contents of the flask in which a second saponification of the cyanacetate is to be effected. If this is done, a yield of malonic ester equal to the weight of chloroacetic acid used can be obtained. This is ten to fifteen per cent. better than by the old method.

ROSE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE,  
TERRE HAUTE, IND., Oct. 27, 1896.

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#### NOTE.

*Untaxed Alcohol for Use in Manufacturing and in the Arts.*—The Joint Select Committee, created at the last session of Congress, to investigate and report upon the question of the use of alcohol free of tax in the manufactures and arts, have prepared a series of interrogatories, which will be distributed throughout the country to such parties as are thought to be interested in the question.

The report of Mr. Henry Dalley, Jr., who was commissioned to investigate the workings of foreign laws governing the use of untaxed alcohol in the manufactures and arts has been submitted, and contains very full and extremely valuable data covering Great Britain, Germany, France, Belgium and Switzerland.

It is the earnest desire of the committee to secure all possible information bearing upon the subject, and it is hoped that parties interested will submit their views to the committee promptly. Sets of the circular letter and blank for replies will be supplied to any applicant by addressing the chairman, Room 21, Senate Annex, Washington, D. C.

The committee, which is composed of three members of each House, will probably assemble in Washington soon after the

middle of November for the purpose of formulating a report to Congress accompanied by the draft of a law which will place domestic industries on as favorable a basis as similar industries in foreign countries. During their sessions in Washington hearings will probably be given in order to supplement the information obtained through the interrogatories above set forth. Due notice of the time of such hearings will be given to the public.

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### OBITUARY NOTICE.

PROFESSOR AUGUST KEKULÉ'S part in the advancement of chemistry has been so important that his death on the 13th of last July has brought a feeling of sorrow to the hearts of chemists throughout the world.

Kekulé was born at Darmstadt, the birthplace of Liebig, on the 7th of September, 1829. It was the intention of his parents that he should become an architect, and he entered the University at Giessen as a student of architecture. He devoted himself with application to the studies bearing on his future calling, but like many another student who came within the range of Liebig's influence, he was filled with an enthusiasm for chemistry, which changed all his plans for the future, and led him to devote himself to this science. It is quite possible that his preliminary architectural studies had much to do with turning his mind toward the ideas of molecular structure or molecular architecture, which he subsequently developed. Kekulé also studied in Paris under Dumas, and in London under Williamson. In 1856 he became privatdocent at the University of Heidelberg. He was appointed professor of chemistry at the University of Ghent (Belgium) in 1858; and in 1865 was called to the University of Bonn, where he remained until his death.

Kekulé's first published work appeared in Liebig's *Annalen* for 1850. Four years later he published his second paper, in which he described thiactic acid and discussed the action of phosphorus pentasulphide on oxygen acids.

The period from 1854 to 1874 was one of the greatest activity with Kekulé. Since 1874 he has made comparatively few con-