

much organic matter this represents, 0.03 gram of a dry albuminoid (peptone) was dissolved in twenty-five cc. of fuming hydrochloric acid and then titrated with permanganate in exactly the same way ; the result was also three cc.

By an easy calculation it follows that five grams of the block-rubber had yielded to the acid about 0.06 gram of organic matter, or about one per cent.

LONDON, ENGLAND, OCTOBER, 1897.

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### OBITUARY.<sup>1</sup>

DR. MEINHARD ALSBERG.—The colleagues and many friends of Dr. Meinhard Alsberg were startled by the news of his sudden and unexpected death in the Adirondacks, while on a visit to his family on September 7th, for though somewhat delicate in appearance, he had impressed all who knew him as one endowed with a good constitution.

Dr. Alsberg was born in 1842, a native of the small German State of Waldeck. Until his fifteenth year he went to the Gymnasium at Korbach, but then was put by his father to a commercial business. This, however, was so much against his inclinations, that he was sent to the Polytechnic at Braunschweig, where on graduating he was awarded a special prize, which induced his uncle to furnish the funds for his university education. He studied at first at Göttingen, and later in Jena, where he graduated in 1864, and became assistant at the University laboratory. In 1865 he came to New York. The friendship of his celebrated teacher, Prof. Wöhler, earned him his first position here soon after his arrival. But he looked upon these positions merely as stepping stones for what he considered his real calling—a manufacturing chemist. His first venture in this direction, the manufacture of lactin, he was soon compelled to give up on account of lack of capital.

He then in 1868 commenced the manufacture of vermilion. He was the pioneer of the successful manufacture of vermilion in this country, and his achievements soon brought him the necessary capital to make the business a paying one. For six

<sup>1</sup> Read before the New York Section, October 15, 1897.

years, commencing in 1873, he merged his business in that of the Ansbach Manufacturing Co., whose manager he was. Since 1880 the firms, in which he was partner, were known successively as Sondheim & Alsberg, Sondheim, Alsberg & Co., and Alsberg & Pfeiffer.

He gradually widened the scope of his manufactures until they practically embraced most colors in ordinary use, and he did this single-handed, and not by the time-honored method of engaging a so-called specialist for a short time.

For this the chemists of our country should be especially thankful, for thereby he has demonstrated, that thorough scientific training, and the art of properly applying it, is the only real secret of success—a truth too often denied.

The *Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter* speaks of Dr. Alsberg as follows: Dr. Alsberg was an expert chemist, with a thorough knowledge of color and color-making, which contributed largely to the success of the firm with which he was connected. He stood high in the trade, and his death will be widely regretted." But though he was a business man, he never forgot science. He not only applied it profitably in his business, but he cultivated it for its own sake. His publications were not many, as is natural with a man whose time is fully occupied with the cares of a business, yet he did all in his power to aid others.

At the time when the *American Chemist* promised to become the *Chemical News* of this country, he belonged to the corps of abstractors, and as such, furnished not only abstracts, but verbal translations of important scientific papers.

Later, when the American Chemical Society was founded, we find him as one of the original eight, who signed the call to the chemists of this country. He was an active and enthusiastic member of the society, and did much for it in the early days of its existence, giving much of his time to drudgery in honorary positions, which the society now is able in some cases to fill by paid officers. He was also an enthusiastic worker for the Society of Chemical Industry.

Of his publications, the following may be mentioned:

In 1864 he published the results of his investigation on some

acrolein compounds, which formed the theme for his inaugural dissertation.

In the *American Chemist* we find two papers on the manufacture of vermilion. (Vol. 1, 205, and Vol. 3, 454.)

In the *Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry* he published a paper on Spontaneous Combustion. (Vol. 14, 947).

He was always ready to help and advise his friends. He was severely honest himself and expected that honesty in others.

H. ENDEMANN.

23 WILLIAM ST., N. Y.

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### BOOKS RECEIVED.

Commercial Fertilizers and Chemicals, and Other Information in regard to Fertilizers. Bulletin No. 33. Season 1896-97. Department of Agriculture of the State of Georgia, Atlanta, Ga. 116 pp.

Winter Protection of the Peach. Peach Growing in Missouri. Bulletin No. 38. Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of the State of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. 25 pp.

First Annual Report of the John Crerar Library for the year 1895. Chicago. 1897. 17 pp.

Second Annual Report of the John Crerar Library for the year 1896. Chicago. 1897. 21 pp.

The Chemical and Metallurgical Society of South Africa. Proceedings at the Monthly Meeting held on Saturday, September 18, 1897. The Rand Agency, Ltd, Secretaries, 37 and 38 Bettelheim Buildings, Johannesburg, S. A. R. 22 pp.

The Medico-Legal Journal. September, 1897. Vol. xv, No. 2. Published by Clark Bell, Esq., 39 Broadway, N. Y. \$3.00 per annum.

The Pharmacist at Work. By William C. Alpers. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1898. pp. ix + 326. Price \$1.50.

Wheat.—1. Test of Varieties. 2. Test of Fertilizers. 3. Description of Varieties. 4. Treatment of Smut. Bulletin No. 69. Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station of the State College of Kentucky, Lexington. Kentucky, September 1897. 18 pp.

A Handbook for Chemists of Beet-Sugar Houses and Seed-Culture Farms. Containing Selected Methods of Analysis, Sugar-House Control, Reference Tables, Etc., Etc. By Guilford L. Spencer, D. Sc., of the U. S. Dept. of Agr. First Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd. 1897. pp. x + 475.