

## OBITUARY NOTICE.

JOSEPH HENRY LANE.

1883—1951.

JOSEPH HENRY LANE was born in London in 1883. He received his early education at Raine's School, Stepney, and his scientific training at Finsbury Technical College under Professor Raphael Meldola and Frederick William Streatfeild. After graduation he remained at Finsbury for a time as research assistant to Professor Meldola and in 1903 and 1904 collaborated in two papers, on the isomeric aminoamidines of the naphthalene series, that were published in the *Journal*.

In 1904 he accepted an appointment in the laboratory of the Beet Sugar Association, subsequently to become the Sugar Association of London, and entered upon what was to become his main interest in life. In the laboratory of the Sugar Association he met Mr. Lewis Eynon, with whom, on the closing of the Sugar Association's laboratory in 1910, he entered into partnership as a consulting chemist, specialising in the analysis of sugars and in the chemistry of fermentation.

He was admitted to Fellowship of the Society in 1941, and was a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry.

Between the years 1909 and 1931 his published work included eight papers and two monographs.

Of his published work the most important was the paper on methylene blue as an internal indicator in the volumetric determination of the reducing sugars by Fehling's solution. His collaborator in this work, Mr. Lewis Eynon, has placed it upon record in *The Analyst* that Lane played the principal part in this discovery, but many laborious months were spent by the partners in experimental verification of its accuracy and precision and in the preparation of the series of factorial tables for the various reducing sugars, which have remained in use to the present time.

According to Lane's own account, he and his partner had already spent much time in trying to improve upon the unsatisfactory external indicators, such as potassium ferrocyanide, ferrous thiocyanate, and a mixture of potassium iodide and starch, then in use; and as he stood one day in his laboratory, surrounded by numerous samples on which determinations of reducing sugars were required to greater accuracy than could be attained otherwise than by the laborious and lengthy gravimetric method, he wondered if he could find a dye that would act in a sugar titration like some of those that were just then coming into use as oxidation-reduction indicators. So he examined his collection of reagents and seeing a bottle of methylene-blue, he tried it—with the result that we all know to-day.

The methylene-blue method immediately gained world-wide recognition. C. L. Hinton wrote of it in 1930 ("Recent Advances in Analytical Chemistry," Ed. C. Ainsworth Mitchell, J. & A. Churchill, London, 1930): "The introduction by Lane and Eynon of methylene-blue as an internal indicator was an advance of the first order. So great has been the gain, in fact, that R. F. Jackson recently stated (*J. Assoc. Off. Agric. Chem.*, 1929, 12, 166) that 'the method is, on account of its convenience, accuracy, and rapidity, largely displacing the gravimetric methods for reducing sugar.' Hinton's statement is as true to-day as when it was first made, twenty years ago. There are not many analytical methods that have stood the test of time so well.

Lane was for many years an abstractor for *J. Soc. Chem. Ind.* and *J. Inst. Brewing*. This brought him a wide experience of the literature of analytical chemistry, which, combined with his ability to write clear, concise English, he turned to good account when he was appointed Assistant Editor to *The Analyst* (in succession to T. H. Pope) in 1936 and Editor in 1945, on the retirement of Dr. Charles Ainsworth Mitchell. He succeeded Mitchell as Secretary of the Society of Public Analysts and Other Analytical Chemists in 1937.

Lane was of a kindly, cheerful, and generous disposition, ever ready to place his knowledge and experience, freely and in full, at the disposal of others. Time and trouble counted for nothing where he could be of help.

" Good temper triumphed in his face,  
And in his heart he found a place  
For all the erring human race . . . "

During his last year of life he bore increasing bodily weakness with great fortitude and remained cheerful to the end, which came to him at Taplow on the 9th March, 1951.

F. L. OXBELL.