

rather as if the author had for the time being forgotten the primary object of his book, and had become so carried away by the intrinsic interest of his subject as to be oblivious to the fact that most of his readers must be entirely ignorant of the rudiments of preventive medicine. With this slight criticism we may pass on to enumerate some of the contents of this section. After chapters on anthrax and tubercle comes a very long one on diphtheria, in which an almost unnecessarily full list of statistics is given. In the chapter on rabies we have an admirable description of Pasteur's discovery and method of preparation of rabies virus. The cholera chapter is no less interesting. The plague chapter gives a detailed and most instructive account of the report of the Indian Plague Commission. Judging from the evidence adduced, this report seems unduly pessimistic, and one would have thought the commissioners entitled to go beyond their finding that "the method of serum-therapy is in plague, as in other infectious diseases, the only method which holds forth a prospect of ultimate success." In the typhoid chapter we are interested to learn that of the 12,234 officers and men forming the military garrison in the siege of Ladysmith, 1705 were inoculated against typhoid fever, and that amongst these the proportion of typhoid cases was only 1 in 48.7, whilst amongst the uninoculated it was 1 in 7.07. Still, there is nothing to indicate whether the inoculated were a fair sample of both men and officers, or were chiefly composed of the latter. The intensely interesting chapter on malaria and yellow fever gives an admirable epitome of the most important work done and results achieved in the elucidation of the cause and prevention of these diseases, and should be read by everyone who is compelled by circumstance to live near fever-haunted spots. Still other chapters deal with myxœdema, the action of drugs, and snake-venom, whilst the book closes with an account of the Vivisection Act and inspectors' reports.

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CHEMICAL TESTS AND THEIR DISCOVERERS.

Tests and Reagents, Chemical and Microscopical, known by their Authors' Names. Compiled by Alfred I. Cohn. Pp. iii+383. (New York: John Wiley and Sons; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1903.) Price 3 dollars.

THE appearance of this volume reminds one of two opposite tendencies that are developing in the terminology of modern chemistry. On the one hand, and more particularly in the "organic" division of the science, the chemist nowadays eschews all trivial or popular terms for his compounds, and strives to find appellations for them which shall be not merely names to remember the substances by, but titles which, at least to the initiated, are more or less self-explanatory. This is very meet and proper, and indeed some such system is probably unavoidable. But the union of the titular with the descriptive, *mariage de convenance* as it is, often produces some very ungainly offspring. Under the writer's eye there lies a recent volume of the *Journal of the Chemical Society*, several pages of which are plentifully besprinkled with such "names"

as Ethylbromoketohydroxydihydropentanthrenedicarboxylate, and this is by no means the worst example that could be cited. Mark Twain once remarked of certain German polysyllabic achievements that they were "not words, but alphabetical processions." Similarly one may say of productions like the one above quoted that they are not names, but descriptive sentences with the verbs left out.

On the other hand, the instinct for brevity—combined sometimes, perhaps, with a suggestion of hero-worship or a tinge of Chauvinism—has simultaneously asserted itself in the upgrowth of a kind of personal nomenclature for numerous things chemical and matters microscopical. We have A's test and B's process; C's reagent and D's reaction; E's "number" and F's "value"; G's theory and H's "law"; every month sees additions to the list; and of the making of these minor immortals there seems no end. Time was when the cognominal designation was a distinct convenience. Perhaps it is so still, but in proportion as the number of such titles increases their utility diminishes, and if the hyphenless monstrosities of organic chemistry are sometimes almost undecipherable from their length, the proper names have become confusing by their multiplicity.

These now need, in fact, a dictionary to themselves. So far as tests and reagents are concerned, such an aid is furnished by the present volume. It gives in alphabetical order many hundreds of proper names by which various chemicals and operations are more or less generally known, and after each name describes, usually in a few words, the essential features of the test or reagent with which the name is associated. Most of the matter has already been published serially by the compiler in Merck's Report, and the amplified instalments are now collected in a single volume, where they will be found very convenient for reference.

What chiefly strikes one on looking through the book is that its value would have been much enhanced by the inclusion of more references to original descriptions, of which, indeed, only a very few are actually given. The increased space required would, surely, have been amply compensated by the greater utility secured. On account of the condensed style in which the descriptions are generally written, they are apt to be sometimes obscure; indeed, their chief value in many cases is that of a reminder to one who is already more or less familiar with the operation described. A person who had never previously performed the experiments would often want more detail, but as to where he could obtain it the author gives him no inkling. Nevertheless, the book will be of service to the busy chemist or microscopist. It does not claim to be a complete record, but there is a good deal of information given, and it appears to be generally accurate in substance if sometimes awkward in expression.

An index of subjects closes the volume, and is rather a curiosity in its way, since the body of it is made up almost entirely of proper names. The book may well find a place with the compiler's "Indicators" on the shelves of the chemical laboratory, and will be found useful in the microscopist's workroom.

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