

SCIENCE CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN.

At the last meeting of the Science Club of the University of Wisconsin, Mr. H. L. Russell favored the club with an exceedingly valuable and timely address on 'Some Recent Investigations relative to Communicable Diseases.' Mr. Russell can speak with authority upon this subject and his expression of opinion regarding the efficiency of methods for preventing the spread of diseases and for eradicating them has an especial interest at this time.

Beginning with a brief synopsis of the state of knowledge concerning the nature and life history of the malarial parasite, Mr. Russell discussed the recent researches as to the relation that mosquitoes hold in the propagation of malaria. The establishment of a definite host in which the sexual propagation of the organism of malaria occurs, and a thorough proof of the rôle that this suctorial insect plays in the dissemination of this disease is one of the most brilliant discoveries in biology in recent years.

The discoveries relating to the bubonic plague were then taken up. After discussion of the etiology of the disease and the method by which it is disseminated, the recent methods of treatment including the preventive and curative treatment were presented. It was pointed out that the United States should with a rigorous quarantine escape the bubonic plague since the period required for the organism of the plague to develop in a patient is less than the time required for vessels to reach our shores from infected oriental ports.

Following this a general discussion of the principles underlying the action of therapeutic and prophylactic treatments of different communicable diseases was given embracing the methods of vaccination that result in the production of active and passive immunity in the body of animals as well as of human beings.

WM. H. HOBBS.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

A NATIONAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF THE
HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY AND COGNATE
ARTS AND SCIENCES.

It is a matter for rejoicing that not only the principal American universities and various in-

stitutes, but also a number of professional colleges, among them those of medicine and pharmacy, have accumulated and are in the possession of more or less comprehensive libraries and museums and that they are aiming at their constant enlargement and completion. Such libraries and museums cannot fail to become more and more potent auxiliaries in the educational and literary objects of these institutions as well as an efficient factor for the advancement of American scholarship and culture.

Most of these libraries are of comparatively recent origin and generally embrace the pertinent scientific and professional literature of modern times but rarely contain any considerable amount of works of past centuries. Such older books are scarcely any longer in the book market and are rarely available except by chance as is particularly the case with works that specially relate to the remoter eras of the history of alchemy, of pharmacy, materia medica, spices, etc. Whoever has had experience in the fascinating study in these domains of historical research will be familiar with the difficulty of finding in any one of the great European libraries an approximately complete collection of the extant literature of all ages. There is quite a difference in this respect among the foremost libraries; they are mostly well provided with the general literature of the past, but are more or less deficient in this special domain of historical records. But in the multiplicity of the great book collections, particularly in Germany, libraries specially rich in ancient works relating to the history of materia medica, alchemy and pharmacy are sometimes located in close proximity and even in one city, like the comprehensive historical libraries of the German National Museum and that of the municipality at Nuremberg, the University and the city libraries at Leipsic and the various great libraries in Berlin, London and Paris. Shortcomings of this kind in the various European libraries are of less consequence to the student as the distances in Central Europe are not considerable and as books are distributed on loan by mail by most libraries.

It is, however, different in a younger civilization, and in a country of so vast an extent as the United States, where the prevailing multi-

plication of libraries, on the one hand, and the increasing scarcity of available books of remoter ages, on the other hand, tend constantly to increase these difficulties. The stock of ancient works in these domains of history is rapidly absorbed by the older standing libraries, and is becoming scarcer and less available from century to century. As these works are of paramount value, and indispensable in historical research and study, it should be the common aim of American scientists interested in the history of applied chemistry, of medicine, pharmacy, and *materia medica*, to conscientiously gather, preserve and, as much as possible, to unite whatever much or little of such ancient books as has been accumulated in American book collections, with a view of ultimately consolidating the scattered parcels of these literary treasures into one American historical library of chemistry and cognate sciences and arts, instead of leaving them dispersed and screened in a multitude of petty private book collections.

Such a desideratum might be realized by the initiative and joint action of the American Chemical Society, of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and of the American Pharmaceutical Association, and should be undertaken in time. An excellent and rare chance, perhaps never to become available again is fortunately close at hand. The various university, and other public, libraries may possess some stray volumes of such historical literature, and in the common interest may consent to transfer them to a central historical library of chemical and cognate literature. But the main stock for the foundation of such a library might be obtained, sooner or later, by the acquisition and the consolidation of two collateral historical libraries of superior extent and value, accumulated by individual efforts and means, during many years of unostentatious, patient, and discriminating collecting. They are the comprehensive libraries of Professor H. Carrington Bolton, in Washington, D. C., and of Professor John Uri Lloyd, and Mr. Curtis G. Lloyd, in Cincinnati, O.; the former embracing, especially, the history of alchemy and chemistry, the latter that of *materia medica*, pharmacy and botany.

By themselves and in the prevailing drift of

indiscriminate multiplication of public and private libraries these two choice libraries would, perhaps pass to coming generations as uncommonly valuable yet separate, and fragmentary book collections in a special domain of historical bibliography and would hardly ever attain to a maximum of usefulness. When united and subsequently completed by further additions in the way of purchases, donations and bequests, they will form in the course of years a national historical library of chemistry, and *materia medica* unequalled in America, and on a par with other kindred achievements of American enterprise and munificence. This would add a potent factor for fostering that 'historical sense' so much appreciated in European civilization and culture and largely needed in the materialistic drift prevailing in our country and time. Nor would American students of the remoter eras of history in these domains of knowledge and application any longer be obliged to resort for historical researches to the libraries of foreign countries.

Another somewhat correlated subject is the collection and preservation of historical articles of all kinds relating to the history of chemistry, pharmacy and *materia medica*, as well as to objects of remembrance of men eminent in these domains of application. Whoever is familiar with the valuable and interesting historical collections of this kind in the ethnographical and art museums of the European capitals, of the National Museum at Nuremberg, and a number of Continental public and private collections will appreciate their usefulness and significance. How many interesting objects of remembrance of eminent chemists and naturalists of the past are still astray and concealed in family and private custody, perhaps never to be gathered in accessible collections as mementos to coming generations! At the occasion of the annual meeting of the Swiss Pharmaceutical Society at Bern in August, 1898, there was in addition to the customary display of apparatus and implements an exhibit of the miscellaneous objects left by the late Dr. Fred. Flückiger, till 1891 professor of pharmaceutical chemistry and pharmacognosy at the university of Strassburg and one of the foremost scholars and writers in these special domains. It comprised laboratory

apparatus, manuscripts, rare books, diplomas medals and various other objects of historical interest and demonstrated impressively the value and usefulness of collections of this kind.

Throughout the United States there is undoubtedly scattered a large number of similar objects and specimens of paramount historical interest and significance left by departed naturalists and students, partly emigrants from European and Central American States, which after the demise of their owners have passed to succeeding generations, perhaps as little understood and appreciated, obsolete relics. Most of such articles, even of more recent American investigators and scholars sooner or later sink into oblivion and frequently are lost. When gathered by purchase, donation or bequest and collected and preserved in one museum they would form a comprehensive collection, valuable and instructive for the history of chemistry and pharmacy as well as of their foremost representative men of the past.

Some such stray relics are to be found in a number of the collections of American institutes and universities, among them in the *materia medica* collection of the National Museum at Washington. They are the few remaining implements of Joseph Priestley from his kitchen laboratory in Northumberland, Pa., which will be remembered by the surviving American chemists who on August 1, 1874, assembled at that secluded village in the beautiful Susquehanna valley in centennial commemoration of the discovery of oxygen. Many interesting objects from the laboratories and studies, as well as an abundance of documents consisting of books, diplomas, medals, manuscripts, correspondence of American chemists and naturalists of the departing century, now scattered and concealed on the shelves of college museums and in domestic shrines, when gathered and united in a national museum, would at once and still more in time form a memorable and most valuable and interesting collection to which the older generation of still living American chemists and scientists would not fail sooner or later to contribute their share.

In this way an historical library and museum of chemistry and cognate sciences and arts

could be realized in the course of time which from the start would bear the impress of a national one and which in interest and value might soon surpass the existing corresponding European libraries and museums.

These random suggestions may be in place and in time at the dawn of a new century. They may also serve as a timely warning to all interested in this matter against dispersing the historical literary treasures and relics of the past and against the untoward multiplication of petty and inadequate historical libraries and collections as met with in the old and not less in the new world.

FRED. HOFFMANN.

BERLIN, April, 1900.

CEDAR COLLARS OF THE NORTH PACIFIC COAST INDIANS.

EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Can any one tell me whether the cedar collars of the North Pacific Coast Indians are made rights and lefts. In Dr. Boas's paper in Report of U. S. National Museum for 1895, on the Kwakiutl Indians there are many examples of the cedar bark collars figured, but it does not appear from the drawings whether they are worn indifferently on the right or left shoulder, that is, whether the ornament is worn on a particular side. The reason for asking is this: The Porto Rican stone collars are rights and lefts. In the National Museum collection of thirty, every one of them is carefully carved to imitate the splice joint shown perfectly in Dr. Boas's examples of cedar bark. In the drama of the expulsion of the Cannibal, acted with so much spirit by these Indians in Chicago, two men led the Cannibal to the fire, each wearing a cedar bark collar. It requires little imagination to transfer this scene to Porto Rico, where stone collars in likeness of those of bark would surround the necks of the captors, one on the right hand, the other on the left, wearing each the decoration outside. I discovered twenty-five years ago that the Porto Rican collars were rights and lefts, also that the overlapping ornament at the side of each stood for the sizing or wrapping of a hoop, but then did not know that Dr. Boas's Kwakiutl Indians were wearing homologous decorations.

O. T. MASON.