

the exit; while the less careful worker is likely to attempt to light the gas prematurely.

All possibility of an explosion is removed by a very simple procedure, which is doubtless widely used, but which has not found its way into the manuals. When the air has been completely expelled, the hydrogen will burn tranquilly in the test-tube. The test-tube, containing the burning hydrogen, is, by a quick movement, brought over the escaping hydrogen. One or two trials will be sufficient to ignite the jet. The towel may be dispensed with.

Neither originality nor novelty is claimed for this suggestion. This note is written merely with the hope that some one of the numerous writers of manuals will revise the directions for this particular exercise and discard the time-honored towel.

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QUOTATIONS

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WITH the testimony yesterday of Dr. Wiley himself, the Moss committee concluded its hearings. President Taft will next be heard from. But conditions have changed since Attorney General Wickersham, after reading a cooked-up case, declared that Dr. Wiley and his associates in guarding the foods and medicines of the people merited "condign punishment." Like thunderbolt the illuminating publication that exposed the doings of the McCabe cabal in the Department of Agriculture must have seemed to Solicitor McCabe and his fellow-conspirators just as they thought their secret charges against the Chief Chemist were accomplishing his ruin. The public now knows that the Food and Drugs Act has been officially disregarded; that scores of important cases against alleged adulterators and misbranders have been deliberately held in abeyance; that department officials did not hesitate to garble the terms of court findings, and that an organized effort was being made, by the cutting down of salaries and

"star chamber" proceedings, to drive honest public servants out of the Bureau of Chemistry. It is not imprudent to predict that if, in his decision, President Taft recommends "condign punishment," the recommendation will not be directed against Dr. Wiley and Dr. Rusby.—*The New York Times*.

It is not too much to say that Dr. Wiley, in his first day's testimony before the House committee, absolutely riddled the case against him. The so-called documentary evidence upon which Attorney-General Wickersham so gravely passed, was no evidence at all. Its chief piece was a letter to Dr. Wiley, but it now appears that it was never sent to him nor received by him. He had nothing whatever to do with making the contract with Dr. Rusby, for which offence his resignation was demanded. The whole thing was to be "subject to the approval of the Department"—that is, the Secretary—though these words were omitted by the personnel board when it published a copy of Dr. Rusby's letter. It is evident that the Attorney-General was grievously misled; he ought to make haste to recall his opinion and to apologize to Dr. Wiley. As for the schemers against Dr. Wiley, the investigation has left them in a most unenviable plight. Their stay in the public service ought to be of the briefest. And the inquiry has, it must also be said, shown such an unhappy state of affairs within the Department of Agriculture, which appears to be honeycombed with intrigue and faction, and badly suffering for lack of firm, executive control, as to indicate the need of its reorganization from the top down.—*The N. Y. Evening Post*.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Mendelism. By R. C. PUNNETT. Third edition, entirely rewritten and much enlarged. Pp. 192, 5 plates and 35 text-figures. New York, The Macmillan Co. 1911. Price \$1.25.

Punnett has shown that a scientific book need not be dull. His new treatise on "Mendelism" is a thorough exposition of a difficult and technical subject, yet it is as entertaining