

# SCIENCE

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## CHEMISTRY AND THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

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IN sorting over some old papers recently I came across one to which I should like to make brief reference. If not to point a moral, it may at least furnish the starting point for a tale.

With due apologies for any personal factors involved, the paper in question was in the form of a certificate or receipt, and conveyed the information that the bearer had satisfied the formal requirements and had paid the matriculation and other fees for entrance as a freshman at a midwestern university. The date of the certification was September 18, 1878, and the name certified thereto was my own.

I should like for a moment to assume the rôle of a historian, for reasons that I trust will be evident a little later. I would not have it inferred that my chemical consciousness suddenly and decidedly sprang into full being on that date, or that I have experienced an even fifty years of chemical joys and sorrows. As a matter of fact, I would like to go back more than fifty years and make a very brief survey of science in general in this country. Several reasons may be assigned. There was at that time hardly enough of any one specific science to occupy all of any one's attention. There seemed to be time for consideration of the field of science as a whole. It was not unusual to have a professor of general science who taught everything from astronomy to chemistry, including between those limits such subjects as botany, zoology, geology, physiology and physics, or natural philosophy as it was more commonly called. It is not strange, therefore, that any one leaning a little away from the classics fifty years ago should lean toward science in general rather than to any specific field under that heading. In my own case there were additional reasons for interest along general lines. One of my most beloved instructors was an ardent admirer and disciple of Agassiz, with an infectious zeal born of direct association with him on the Isle of Penikese. Another instructor was at the time, and still holds active leadership as, the greatest authority in this country on birds and fishes. Another was direct from the laboratory of the great Liebig, and was just assuming charge of a department already well organ-

<sup>1</sup> Presidential address delivered at the 76th meeting of the American Chemical Society, Swampscott, Mass., September 16 to 19, 1928.

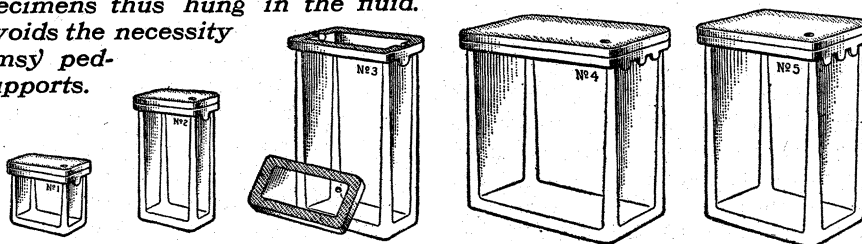
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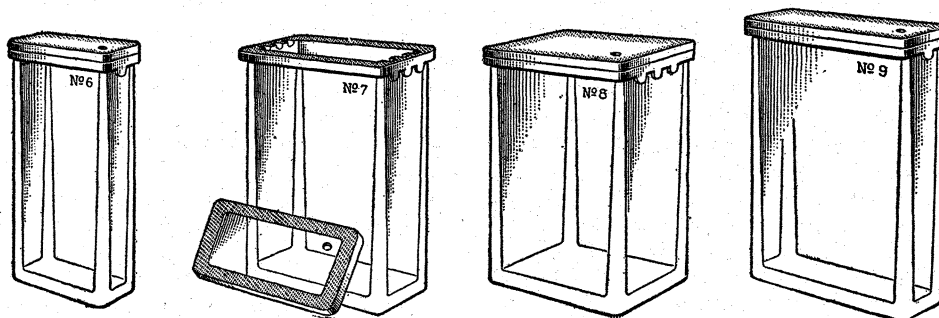
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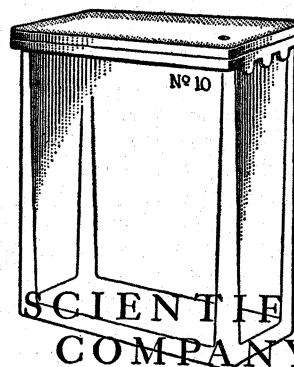


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