THE 169TH MEETING
PITTSBURGH SECTION
AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY
Thursday, January 20, 1921, at 8:15 P. M.

—AT—
MELLON INSTITUTE, Thackeray Avenue and O'Hara Street

MR. R. B. GILMORE
Ceramic Engineer for the Vesuvius Crucible Company
WILL SPEAK ON

"SOME PROBLEMS IN GRAPHITE CRUCIBLE MANUFACTURE"

Mr. Gilmore studied Ceramic Engineering at Ohio State University and has, since graduation, made an extensive study of graphite crucible manufacture for the Vesuvius Company and in co-operation with the United States Bureau of Mines.

The topic should prove of interest to manufacturers of ferrous and non-ferrous metals.

The lecture will be illustrated with lantern slides and specimens.

Advance Announcement

The February meeting of the society will be the annual smoker. In other words, it will be the semi-annual Humdinger! Remember the date, February 17.
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TALK BUSINESS TO US AT THE PITTSBURGH BRANCH
ACROSS THE TABLE

"Chemists are impossible!" exclaimed the Vice-President. "From a personal, social, business point of view I've never seen a class to beat them. Answer letters? Never! Nothing, from a wedding invitation to a tax bill, registers on their attention. I doubt if they know how to open a letter, let alone show the initiative to make some response. Why, I've lost thousands of dollars for the firm because the laboratory ignores my letters. I'd put the whole scientific force through a grammar school of personal etiquette if I had my way!"

"Not so fast," interposed the Editor, "how'd you like to edit a chemical journal, especially one that aims to show the personal and social side of the chemist's life?"

"Nonsense," said the V. P., "they haven't got any. I doubt whether they answer when they're spoken to. Why, my little Fido—"

"Maybe you'd like the job of collecting a dollar a year from a thousand chemists," broke in the Treasurer. "You're right, I'll say. Print a notice in their own journal that the dollar is due—you might get five dollars. Insert a bright red slip to the same effect:—well maybe fifteen would notice it. Send them a mimeographed circular letter:—well, you might get twenty-five,—which wouldn't pay for sending it. Increase your expense ten times and send individual statements, special delivery and registered perhaps, and you'd get a response alright, but you never can tell whether it would pay. Believe me, I'd a lot rather hunt for an angel somewhere and get the thousand out of him. It would save time, effort and money. Now why is it? Can you tell me, Professor?"

"Yes, why are they built that way," asked the Editor, "Now collecting money, after all, is in a class by itself. But you might expect that when we ask an expert to write an article on a subject which is in his chosen field and in which he is better informed than any man in the country, perhaps, that he'd take the opportunity to send something snappy by return mail. But too often we think we're fortunate to get so much as a promise. Some day I'm going to publish all the promises we have filed away. And, if it comes to that, it wouldn't be bad reading to print a list of unanswered letters, either."

They waited for the Professor. "Well," he said, "did you ever visit any number of University campuses? Ever notice where they put the Chemical Laboratory? It's always the oldest building on the campus, of course, built just after the power house,—and right next to it. The power house has grown since the old days, remodelled, repainted and much enlarged, so that the laboratory is usually tucked away nowadays in a corner behind it and completely out of contact with the rest of the University. Are visitors ever brought there? Do the fraternities go through the chemical lists to find their pledges? Does the college paper ever mention chemical affairs? Did you ever hear of the popular college hero rushing to the lab to finish an analysis? You know the answer. The chemists are not in that class. They're a queer lot, self-centered hermits who cultivate an atmosphere of their own. They contribute to the scenery, like the coal pile and the fellows who mow the dandelions, but, —Oh, yes, I know it's all wrong and your Alma Mater may not have been like that but, just the same, most of the time they're not known on the other side of the campus. They steer away from "the Humanities" and, in short, they're not human. Why should they know about answering letters? They may be able

Continued on page 7
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With the first of January, the newly chosen officers take up the responsibilities of the new year for the Pittsburgh Branch. These men are such that they are both a promise and a guarantee of a very successful year. We wish to congratulate them upon their election. It is a distinct honor to be chosen by the popular vote of our Section.

There are many important duties ahead of our new leaders. Not the least of these is the preparation for the meeting in Pittsburgh next year of the American Chemical Society. We must show the parent organization that she has a lively child here.

To our congratulations, we therefore add our good wishes.

* * * *

TRADE SECRETS AND INDUSTRIAL CHEMISTS

Sober reflection over the thoughts advanced at the Chicago and Milwaukee A. C. S. intersectional meeting leads to the conclusion that much information on chemical processes is now being uselessly suppressed to the retardation of industry. Trade secrets are in a large majority of cases the common property of operators within the trade. The only object in the suppression of such information is to prevent competitors from profiting thereby. But since they are already advised, an open procedure can work no harm. It may do inestimable good to other industries; for it is always true that operation in one industry may be modified for profitable adaptation to work entirely outside the line in which it originates.

There are exceptions to spreading information immediately in the case of patents and certain non-patentable mechanical features. Time is the governing factor, however. The other fellow soon discovers the new development.

A certain manufacturer has very rigid rules regarding secrecy of his operations. He signs up his employees, surrounds his plant with mystery and a high board fence. But the fence is not high enough to hide the heavy niter fumes issuing from the towers of his sulphuric acid plant. Directly across the street is a large set of acid chambers operating at full capacity. Not the slightest mist is apparent over its stack. This plant is operated by a company with a broad open-handed policy that makes for advancement throughout the technical departments. The first company cannot well muster the "brass" to ask to inspect the plant where other folks are welcome. They will probably send a representative in the dark of the night or disguised as a workman to find out how it's done. Meanwhile the fume waves in the prairie breeze like a flag proclaiming ingrown industrial degeneracy to the passing chemist.

When you feel secretive, remember the other fellow may have a better line of information than yourself. Dissemination of information brings returns and is therefore not simply altruistic—"From December "Chemical & Metallurgical Engineering."
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Beginning next month, your "Crucible" will have the new editorial staff and requests the enthusiastic co-operation of every chemist in the section.

** * * * * *

At the last meeting, there was a long discussion of the question of associating with the engineering societies of Pittsburgh, the proposed constitution for which was published in our last issue. The matter was referred to the Executive Committee with instructions to submit a proposal for our action. This work has not proceeded far enough to be reported in this number of The Crucible.

** * * * * *

Dr. Weber, our new Chairman, tells us that a suggestion has been made that a supper be served at the cafeteria of the University of Pittsburgh each evening of the society's meetings. This is proposed partly as a convenience for men living at a distance and partly as a means to get the members together socially.

The columns of this paper have been advocating a Chemists' Club for Pittsburgh. If such an undertaking can not be launched at this time, this proposal for monthly dinners is a good one. It would be the best thing to a club and would involve a much smaller financial risk.

The University Cafeteria is across the street from the Mellon Institute. It is therefore convenient to our meeting place. If this plan should meet with approval, the only difficulty will be to know in advance how many men will be present at each dinner, for the meal could not be served upon uncertainties.

One way to guarantee the attendance would be for some public spirited men to buy tickets and thus be responsible either to be there themselves or get some one else to go and use the ticket. If thirty such tickets should be sold, the thing would be a success.

Some of our readers may have better suggestions to make. Let us hear from you at the next meeting. The writer favors any practical plan which will get us together oftener. And who knows but that just such a plan as this may lead to a Chemists' Club?

---

** WATER **

Pittsburgh has a water supply which is as free from disease germs as the naturally pure supply from mountain springs which one or two cities in the world still have. The typhoid fever death rate is now as low as in the cities mentioned.

It required investigation and agitation, beginning in 1892 and culminating in 1907, when the Pittsburgh Filtration Plant was first put into service. Since then the efficiency of the plant has been constantly improved under the superintendence of Mr. Chester F. Drake, and his right hand man, Mr. W. U. C. Baton, Chief Chemist and Bacteriologist, and member of our society.

I personally take great satisfaction in having worked hard, and to some purpose in overcoming prejudice and ignorance concerning the Pittsburgh Water Supply and its improvement. The purity of the water supply in future will be safe in the hands of its present custodians.

Yours very truly,

Jas. O. Handy.

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ACROSS THE TABLE

Continued from page 3

to make a postage stamp out of a pine stump, a lump of coal and a horse's hoof, and they get plenty of inspiration out of that,—why need they know the gentleman whose picture is on the stamp? That's not in their line."

"You win," said the Vice-President as the signal was given for clearing the tables for the evening talk. "But don't talk to me about underpaid chemists. It can't be done; it's a liability to let them live at all. If I had my way I'd have Mr. ___ write a chemical bible for each and every one to carry over his heart or in his hat. Remember his lines in your paper in January?

"Business after all is nothing but applied common sense. Is there any reason why one brain cannot hold both applied common sense and applied chemistry?"

"Most chemists hold good hands and play them like amateurs. Most business men hold nothing but a small pair and take the pot."

"He knows, and I know he knows. I'm not a V. P. for nothing. But then, it's an easy guess that they wouldn't read that bible if you gave it to them. How many do you suppose will admit that they read his epigrams when you printed them? And how many have made even the slightest appreciable response, mental, moral or physical? Why not organize a Committee for the Stimulation of Common Sense?"

"No," replied the Treasurer, "no use,—they wouldn't acknowledge the letters of appointment."

From The Chemical Bulletin.
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MELLON INSTITUTE

Dr. Raymond F. Bacon, Director of the Institute, was nominated by the local section of the American Chemical Society for the presidency of that body for the coming year.

Dr. Bacon delivered an address before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts & Sciences, Brooklyn, N. Y., on "Industrial Research."

Assistant Director Hamor has left the hospital for his home in New Kensington and is rapidly recovering from an operation for appendicitis.

Associate Director Weidlein has returned from a business trip through the West.

Melvin DeGroote has been transferred to a new Fellowship and is working along the lines of application of Emulsion Chemistry to Food Products. Mr. DeGroote is publishing the following three articles this month:

2. Alcoholic Content of Flavoring Extracts, in Spice Mill.

On December 21st, Mr. Mark Shepard will be married to Miss Murriel Earley. They will make their home in Pittsburgh.

Mr. F. G. Straub has left the Institute to take up work on Coke Investigation with the Semet-Solvay Company, at Syracuse, N. Y.

Governor Dorsey headed a delegation of prominent Georgians who visited the Institute November 19th.

Mr. E. O. Rhodes announces the arrival of a new research chemist, Carl Seyler Rhodes.

Dr. John F. W. Schulze, formerly an Industrial Fellow of the Mellon Institute, is now Assistant Chief of the Chemical Research and Development Division of the Chemical Warfare Service at Edgewood Arsenal, Edgewood, N. J.

Dr. A. F. Shupp, Ph. D., University of Pittsburgh, has recently taken up work at the Institute on the Protected Metals Fellowship.

ALUMINUM COMPANY OF AMERICA

Mr. Junius D. Edwards, chief of the Physical Chemistry Division of the Research Bureau, has been appointed Assistant Director of Research.

Mr. Lowell H. Milligan has tendered his resignation from the Research Bureau, effective February 1st, in order to pursue graduate study at Cornell University under Professor Wilder D. Bancroft.

Mr. C. M. Bardwell spent New Year's Day at his home in Aurora, Illinois; Mr. H. A. Pippel spent Christmas at his home in Minnesota.

Dr. Francis C. Frary spent New Year's Day in Minneapolis.

ALPHA CHI SIGMA NOTES

Dr. Carl J. Engelder and F. T. Jung are newcomers at the house.

The Pittsburgh Alumni held their monthly dinners at Kleman Inn on Dec. 14 and January 6th, much important business was transacted at the latter meeting. The alumni are showing interest in these meetings and it is hoped to get in touch with all in this section.

The District Conclave will be held at this chapter in the early part of February.

The next smoker will be held at the house on Friday evening, Jan. 28, Alumni are cordially invited.

THE CHEMISTS' ANNUAL SMOKER

Once each year we get together for an evening in which our Entertainment Committee gives us a program of something other than "shop." It's always the biggest meeting of the Winter and you are sure to see all your old chemist friends at this meeting, some of whom you have not seen since the outing.

Our Smoker this year will be held on Thursday, February 17th and the next number of the Crucible will announce the details.

There are just two things we want to ask of the Entertainment Committee to do. First—Show us the moving pictures that the Scientific Materials Co. took at last year's outing. Second—Tell us the truth about that arrest of Zimmernan. Was that an honest-to-gosh Policeman and did he really pinch Zimmernan?

PERSONAL NEWS

WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC AND MANUFACTURING CO.

MacRae has returned beaming from his Christmas Vacation which he spent in Virginia and North Carolina. One must admire Mac's good nature which survived the treatment he speaks of having received. It seems that on different occasions he was held by main force and cocktails were poured down his unwilling throat. It hardly seems possible that such things should occur in this advanced age. (Dr. Kellog wants to know where this occurred.)

The American Field Service Scholar-
ship in a French University which is fi-
nanced by the Westinghouse Electric & Manu-
facturing Company has been award-
ed to John Division Alley of the Metall-
surgical and Inorganic Chemical Section of the Research Department. Mr. Alley is a graduate of Muskingum College with several years teaching experience and a year's graduate work at Columbia. He served at American University in France with the Chemical Warfare Ser-
vice and after discharge was Associate Professor of Chemistry at Muskingum College from which position he came to the Westinghouse Electric & Manufac-
turing Company. Mr. Alley expects to leave for France about June and will take up Physical Chemistry, probably at Paris. The American Field Service Scholarship carries $200 plus 10,000 francs annually. A report on this scholar-
ship is to be found in a recent number of the Journal of Industrial and Engi-

BUREAU OF MINES

Messrs. A. C. Fieldner and Reinhardt Thiessen attended the sessions of the an-
nual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Chicago during the holidays.

Dr. Herbert Insley has entered the Bu-
reau of Mines as petrographer. Dr. Ins-
ley will conduct investigations on the dust hazard in metal mines and related studies in petrography. He is a gradu-
ate of Johns Hopkins University and comes to the Bureau of Mines from the U. S. Geological Survey.

Dr. Thiessen has presented three pa-
ers during the month of December. An illustrated talk on "Recent Developments in the Microscopic Study of Coal" was presented before the Coal Mining Insti-
tute of America. A paper on "The Use of the Microscope in Ceramics" was given before the Pittsburgh Section of the American Ceramic Society. "Origin and Composition of Certain Oil Shales" was presented before the Geological Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Chicago.

Mr. Leroy Carl has entered the Bu-
reau of Mines to engage in work in the Explosives Section.

The resignation of Dr. F. G. Cottrell as Director of the Bureau of Mines has been announced. Dr. H. Foster Bain has been appointed Acting Director. Dr. Bain was formerly Director of the Illi-
inois State Geological Survey, was at one
time editor of "Mining and Scientific Press" and during the war was Assis-
tant Director of the Bureau of Mines.

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**Spring, 2017**

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