

Science Notes

BY WILLIAM G. HAYNES.

GERMANY AS NATURE'S COMPETITOR.

An admitted fact it is that no nation was better prepared than Germany to be isolated from the outside world and, in company with her allies, forming the group known as the central powers, compelled to rely almost entirely on her own resources. To her remarkable self-sustaining powers, Germany credits the Teuton chemist as having contributed in a greater degree than any other single factor. And since the German chemist has for years been establishing an ascendancy over the chemists of other nations, until we have come to look upon Germany and chemistry as synonymous words in the broader sense, this would seem logical.

While fully appreciating the skill of German chemists and their numerous past achievements, it is inevitable that scientific men the world over should be rather skeptical regarding the wonderful discoveries claimed to have been scored in the isolated empire since the opening of the European war. It is inconceivable that so many problems long baffling solution at the hands of the foremost scientists of the world should suddenly be mastered in the Teuton laboratories in so short a period as sixteen months. Admitting that the very urgency of the demand for synthetic products has spurred the German chemist to a point of frenzy and the will to conquer that have been unknown to other chemists, still, the great number of achievements and their remarkableness alone would give rise to incredulity; let alone the fact that Germany has striven both openly and in secret to secure the much needed commodities from the outside world in every conceivable way.

We have heard of the new gas used in the latest super-Zeppelins which is lighter than hydrogen and positively unflammable, eliminating at one stroke the very feature that has rendered lighter-than-air craft liable to accidental explosions at any moment, as well as most vulnerable to hostile fire; of the successful substitution of alcohol and benzol for petroleum, paper for jute, and newly-discovered formula for artificial leather and rubber; of the discovery of microbes that convert sugar into important life-sustaining fats; of wonderful compressed food that is at once both inexpensive and most nourishing; of explosives made from wood pulp, and other feats of chemistry too numerous to mention.

In view of the foregoing facts, the question naturally arises: Why does Germany exert every effort in her power to obtain the necessary materials and certain foodstuffs from the outside world? Is this not in direct contradiction to her boastful claims that, in German laboratories, and not on the sea and land, has the blockade of the allies been defeated?

The seeming mystery is simple of explanation. It is safe to assume—and to some extent is borne out by the United States consular reports—that the achievements claimed by the German chemists have actually taken place; but, and here is the vital point, in most instances the cost and difficulties inherent to the making of the synthetic products have been so great that they limit these discoveries to the laboratory, rendering them

practically valueless in the commercial sense. And in this respect the Teuton chemists are in a position that is not unique; recent years having witnessed the appearance of many substitutes for natural products, few of which ever ventured forth from the laboratory and into the commercial world, because of the cost of production.

Thus the work of Germany's chemists while commendable in the highest degree cannot hope to compete successfully with nature and to aid the central powers against the enforced isolation which the war has brought on them.

ARTIFICIAL PEARLS.

Large artificial pearls have been made by filling thin glass bulbs with a solution of fish scale nacre and they are very clever imitations. An easy way to detect them is to note the spot where the bulb was sealed. Liesegang has now made artificial pearls by another method. The glass bulb is coated on the inside with 10 per cent gelatin solution, allowed to dry only partially and then a small amount of sodium phosphate added and the coating dried very slowly. The iridescence is an optical phenomenon caused by minute wrinkles, parallel, formed on the gelatin.—Scientific American.

Event Extraordinary.

Mr. William H. Lacey, a trained artist of exceptional ability, will sing at the extraordinary entertainment at Mt. Zion Baptist church Friday evening, December 17. Mrs. W. T. Osborne has in charge the occasion and will be supported by the DuBois Dramatic club in a one-act comedy-drama, "The Veiled Lady," which shows—well, come and see what it does show.

Other trained artists in both vocal and instrumental music and in readings and sketches from Shakespeare will appear on the program. A committee from the trustee board of Knights and Daughters of Tabor succeeded in getting Mrs. Osborne to give this entertainment for the benefit of the Taborian lot.

We are sure of a large attendance, as Mrs. Osborne's entertainments are always the very best. Admission will be 15c.

Committee and board of trustees: Chairman, Mrs. Hattie Kitchen; Mrs. Lenora Gray, Mrs. Rachel Harrold, A. M. Harrold, D. G. M.; W. M. Jackson, C. M.; Charles Kitchen, P. P.; Lulu Roundtree, P. P.—Adv.

DR. CONDRA'S MOVING PICTURES AT NEBRASKA FARMERS' CONGRESS

Omaha, Neb., Dec. 4.—One thousand farmers of Nebraska attended the sixth annual convention of the Nebraska Farmers' Congress, which convened in Omaha November 30 to December 2. This organization, while only six years old, and having started with a mere handful of members, is now a very large and influential body, which has a great deal to do and say about the destinies of the state. A very interesting program was given. Some of the important subjects discussed were "Marketing of Farm Products," by Hon. C. J. Brand, chief of office of farm marketing, United States department of agriculture; "The Relation of the State University to the Agricultural Interests of the State," by Chancellor S. Avery, University of Nebraska, and "Rural Credits," by Hon. F. G. Odell, secretary of the American Rural Credit association.

Dr. George E. Condra of the University of Nebraska brought his

moving picture films to Omaha the evening of December 1, and showed and explained important things in agricultural development. Dr. Condra is secretary of the Nebraska Public Welfare commission, which is doing effective work to make the people of Nebraska conversant with the resources and opportunities of their state.

SILAS JOHNSON, SUCCESSFUL HEADWAITER

"Men may come and men may go" applies to the frequent changes that have been made in headwaiters at the various Omaha hotels. One hotel has proven an exception. It is The Merchants. The management of that hostelry has changed three or four times in the last twenty-two years, but despite change of management, there was one man whose services have been retained because of the satisfaction he gave to patrons—a most important consideration—and employers, and that man was Silas Johnson, whose cut it gives us pleasure to publish in this issue of The Monitor. He is a man who has "made good" in his chosen calling. And one of the chief purposes of these biographical sketches which we are publishing from time to time is to show that success in any given line of honorable employment is to be won only by competence and strict application to business.

Mr. Johnson became headwaiter at the Merchants hotel in 1893, when it was under the management of Paxton, Hulett and Davenport, and remained there, serving most acceptably in that capacity until a few weeks ago, when he resigned to accept the position of headwaiter at an increased salary at the new Hotel Castle. For twenty-two continuous years he held the one position, which is the record for headwaiters in Omaha. In point of continuous service he is the oldest headwaiter in the city, if not in the state, and he is not an old man by any means.

Silas Johnson is the son of Cyrus and Parthenia Johnson and was born in Owensboro, Ky., and is proud of his native state, although he is not fond of the beverage which has given that state distinction. For a few years he was in the employ of a railroad company. He has resided in Omaha for twenty-five years. In 1894 he was married to Miss Ida M. Bell, oldest daughter of Cyrus D. Bell, and they have a cosy and attractive home at 2304 North Twenty-ninth street.

Mr. Johnson has a wide acquaintance throughout the state. His cordiality has made him many fast friends. Being punctual and regular himself at business, he has insisted upon the same traits in his subordinates and it is a noteworthy fact that his waiters have been pleased to remain with him. He is a type of our self-respecting, home-loving, industrious citizens of which Omaha has many.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION TO MEET IN OMAHA EARLY IN YEAR

Omaha, Neb., Dec. 10.—The Nebraska Public Health association will meet in Omaha some time early in 1916. Public health officers of cities and towns, as well as physicians throughout the state who are interested in public health questions, will attend this meeting. This meeting is fostered by the State Board of Medical Examiners and the State Board of Health proper. Experts in public health and sanitation matters will be asked to participate in the meeting. The attendance at these meetings usually averages 250.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

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