

## OBITUARY

It is difficult to realize that Otto Hehner is gone from us. The blow is all the more severe because it was so unexpected. He was attacked by malaria and died on September 9th.

Otto Hehner was born November 25th, 1853, at Marienberg, in Nassau. His father was a judge of the High Court of Appeal in Wiesbaden, and it was doubtless this legal strain in his blood which gave him that intuitive grasp of the legal aspects of the case, which was freely acknowledged by the leaders of the English Bar, who so often met him in consultation. He was educated at Wiesbaden, studied chemistry under Fresenius until in 1873 he moved to Glasgow where he became assistant to Professor Bischof. At about the same time Ramsey was also starting his professional career also as assistant to Bischof and the association between the two young men was formed which closed only with Ramsey's life.

Among the outstanding investigations associated with his name it may be recalled that the method of analyzing beeswax, based upon the constant ratio of free cerotic acid to myricin, was first devised by Hehner in 1881 (*Analyst*, 1881, 8, 16), and that Hubl, whose name is associated with the method, did not publish the same discovery until a few months later. The dichromate method of estimating glycerol in fats was another contribution to analytical chemistry and has long been accepted as a standard process (*Analyst*, 1888, 12, 44), and the Hehner method of estimating the hardness in water without the use of soap solution is almost as widely known (*Analyst*, 1884, 8, 77).

The characteristics which must have struck everyone first in dealing with Hehner were his straightforwardness, his love of justice and the simplicity of his nature. To those who did not know him well his manner might seem brusque at times, and he was inclined to be impatient with those whose brains moved more slowly than his. Yet these were only surface faults, and beneath was a deep vein of genuine sympathy. None of his friends ever turned to him in vain for counsel or help, and only those who were closely associated with him know of his many acts of kindness and generosity even to complete strangers. His outlook on life was shrewd, but never cynical, and was always instinct with a broad humanity. When the writer first knew him he was inclined to be dogmatic in the expression of his views, but time softened this and in his later years he showed a kindly tolerance of the opinions of those from whom he differed.

In his chemical work he showed that gift which is akin to genius, of seeing instinctively the crux of a problem, and he would eagerly devise ingenious methods of testing the truth of its hypothesis. At the same time he had the drawback, which is frequently part of such a temperament, of being too readily discouraged if his first efforts were unsuccessful.

Much of his time was spent in the Law Courts, and he was never happier than when he was working up the chemical side of a case and devising experiments which could be shown in Court to convince judge and jury of the truth of his contention. He was an excellent witness, clear and concise in his evidence, and always ready with a humorous answer for a cross-examining counsel.

Although in the later years of his life he was denied the happiness of the home life for which he was so well fitted, he remained unsoured, and was always ready to join in any piece of boyish fun on hand. In one of his letters to the writer he mentioned how happy he had been in his friendships throughout life. He was a lovable man, and his death makes a great and lasting gap in the lives of all of us who loved him.

C. A. MITCHELL.\*

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## ABSTRACTS FROM OTHER JOURNALS

**The recognition of hydrogenated oils.** K. A. WILLIAMS, B.Sc., AND E. R. BOLTON, F.I.C. *The Analyst*, October, 1924.—The test most widely applied for the detection of hydrogenated oils is based on the presence of traces of nickel in the oil. The evidence given by this test is confirmed by the use of certain tests of minor importance and of doubtful reliability such as microscopic examination of the crystals deposited from solutions of fat in ether. Unless nickel is found in considerable quantities the test is of little value as nowadays hydrogenated fats are manufactured free of all sub-

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\* From the *Analysis*, 49, 502 (Nov., 1924.)