

Educational Department.

Chemical Paradoxes.

We are accustomed to associate the idea of combustibility with paper. If it be wrapped tightly around a metallic rod, it can be held in a gas-flame without burning. The metal carries the heat away from it as fast as applied—becoming hot itself. After a while it will reach a temperature—provided the flame is large enough—at which the paper will burn. The same phenomenon can be more strikingly exhibited by making a vessel of paper, filling it with water, and applying heat. No matter how hot the flame over which it is placed may be, the paper will not burn. The water will boil, and the heat be absorbed or rendered latent in the production of steam. An egg can thus be boiled in a paper saucepan. A sieve may be made to hold water or to float. If the interstices are very fine and the wire bright and dry, the water will not wet it, because a film of air will adhere to the wires. The lower surface of the water is divided by the meshes into a number of little spheroidal projections, in which the capillary force, or internal gravitation, and also cohesion, come into play. These hold the water together, so that some considerable power is required to force the water through the meshes. Thus we can put a quantity of water in a fine sieve, or place one in water, and it will float. If the wires are not perfectly bright, we may distribute over their surface some powder which water will not wet. The dust of bituminous coal is excellent. Carrying out this principle, needles, if bright, may be made to float without the least trouble, and will float for a long time.

Water is to be made to boil by cold. A flask half full of water is maintained at ebullition for some minutes. It is removed from the source of heat, corked, inverted, and placed in one of the rings of a retort stand. If cold water is poured on the upturned bottom of the flask, the fluid will start into violent ebullition. The upper portion of the flask is filled with steam, which maintains a certain pressure on the water. By cooling the upper portion of the flask some of this is condensed and the pressure reduced. The temperature at which water boils varies with the pressure. When it is reduced, water boils at a lower heat. By pouring the cold

water over the flask we condense the steam so that the water is hot enough to boil at the reduced pressure. To assert that water boils by the application of cold is a chemical sophism. *The Teacher.*

Anecdote of a Great Naturalist.

A good story is told of Agassiz, the great naturalist. His father destined him for a commercial life, and was impatient at his devotion to frogs, snakes and fishes. The last, especially, were objects of the boy's attention. His vacations he spent in making journeys on foot through Europe, examining the different species of fresh-water fishes. He came to London with letters of introduction to Sir Robert Murchison. "You have been studying nature," said the great man bluntly. "What have you learned?" The lad was timid, not sure at that moment that he had learned anything. "I think," he said, at last, "I know a little about fishes." "Very well. There will be a meeting of the Royal Society to-night. I will take you with me there." All of the great scientific savants of England belonged to this society. That evening, towards its close, Sir Roderick rose and said: "I have a young friend here from Switzerland, who thinks he knows something about fishes; how much, I have a fancy to try. There is, under this cloth, a perfect skeleton of a fish which existed long before man." He then gave the precise locality in which it had been found, with one or two other facts concerning it. The species to which the specimen belonged was, of course, extinct. "Can you sketch for me on the blackboard your idea of this fish?" said Sir Roderick. Agassiz took up the chalk, hesitated a moment, and then sketched rapidly a skeleton fish. Sir Roderick held up the specimen. The portrait was correct in every bone and line. The grave old doctors burst into loud applause. "Sir," Agassiz said, on telling the story, "that was the proudest moment of my life—no, the happiest, for I knew, now, my father would consent that I should give my life to science."—*Pacific.*

There is the following anecdote concerning the late Horace Maynard, Postmaster-General in President Hayes' Cabinet. "When Mr. Maynard went to Amherst College, and the embarrassment of the freshman had passed off and he had been assigned his room, he pasted

the letter V, of large size, over the door of his room and said nothing about it. It was soon discovered, however, by the students of the College, and Mr. Maynard was asked what that letter V was for over his door. He answered evasively, saying he wanted something to designate his room; said the letter V was in straight lines, and he had a preference for straight lines. For some months the students joked him about the mark over his door. After becoming an old story, it was mentioned less frequently and was apparently forgotten, but the V remained. At the end of four years, graduation day came, and Mr. Maynard was appointed to deliver the valedictory. After having received the compliments of the faculty and students of the college for the honor he had received, Mr. Maynard called the attention of his fellow-graduates to the letter V over the door of his room, and asked if they then understood what was meant by the letter V. After short reflection, they answered: 'Yes. Valedictory.' He replied: 'You are right.' His fellows then asked if he had the valedictory on his mind when he pasted the letter over his door. Mr. Maynard replied: 'Assuredly I had.' The graduates then congratulated him on his perseverance and for his success, and separated for their homes."—*E. C.*

Carry the News.

Mr. John Etzensperger, manufacturing Jeweler of North Attleboro', Mass., lately communicated to us the following: I suffered so much with pains in my arm, that at times I was completely helpless. I used that incomparable remedy St. Jacobs Oil and was completely cured as if by magic.

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