

problem. After obtaining the benzoate, Professor Abel then made other compounds, and as the result of his analyses he considered the empirical formula to be $C_{17}H_{15}NO_4$, thus approaching in elementary composition some of the alkaloids. The composition of pseudomorphine, for example, is represented by $C_{17}H_{15}NO_4$, that of cocaine by $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$, that of sanguinarine by $C_{23}H_{15}NO_4$, and that of benzylidene collodine dicarboxylic acid by $C_{17}H_{15}NO_4$, and among these alkaloids sanguinarine is noteworthy for its power to raise the blood pressure. It was found that skatol was one of the discomposition products of this body. It is of interest to note in this connection, as the author points out, that Stohr has shown that skatol is liberated when strychnine is heated with calcium oxide, and that Hoffmann and Königs have obtained indol from tetrahydroquinoline by passing its vapor through a tube heated to redness. He considers the picrate will likely prove the easiest to manipulate and most valuable and promises future contributions in regard to it.

There is no doubt that the future of medicine lies in the domain of biological chemistry. It is there the greatest triumphs will reward the investigator, and the greatest benefit accrue to medical science from the practical application of his results. We can rest assured, however, with such a distinguished investigator as Professor Abel to head the school of biological chemistry here, that in the future we will have to share very few of our triumphs with Europe.

"CORONERS."

A very timely editorial on this subject appeared lately in the *Globe*. It said, as we have said before in these columns, that the position of affairs in this city in reference to this particular class of officers is, to put it very mildly, undignified.

To consider their first reference in regard to the unnecessary holding of inquests, we would say, that by the previous law a coroner could not hold an inquest unless he made a declaration of his belief that there were suspicious circumstances about the case which indicated foul play. It was then pointed out that the natural delicacy of conscience which existed in the professional coroner, had a tendency to let those cases in which there were no manifest evidence of foul play go by without an inquest, and thus many criminals escaped justice. To provide against this evil, due, as we pointed out, chiefly to the excessive tenderness of the said coroners conscience, there was inaugurated what has become so widely known in the effete East as the "open door." It might be remarked in justice to those who believed that the open door policy was not requisite for the holding of all the inquests that were necessary, that the number of inquests have not materially increased. We do not refer to the issuance of the coroner's warrant, for which the coroner is paid \$5.00, and it is this \$5.00 which looks as big as a house when the coroner gets on his bicycle and starts for the police station. The most active defenders of the present condition of affairs are the most notorious offenders against public and professional decency, and we consider the *Globe* is absolutely and unqualifiedly right in everything it has said in reference to this matter. As has often been said, the office of a critic is an easy one. It is more difficult to point out a remedy. The *Globe's* remedy, the appointment of an official coroner for the city on salary, not on fees, would undoubtedly greatly aid the ends of justice, besides being a great saving to the municipality. We, however, have to propose a remedy much simpler, much more ready of execution, and particularly practical in the present condition of affairs, and that is the appointment of the present police surgeons as coroners. There are three