

*culus*, *Aster Fendleri*. Specimens of these and many others were exhibited to the Society.

Mr. Walter Hough read a paper on 'The Mokis in Relation to their Plant Environment,' and Mr. G. W. Littlehales exhibited and described a new machine for engraving parts of the plates from which charts and maps are printed.

BERNARD R. GREEN,  
*Secretary.*

CHEMICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON.

THE 90th regular meeting of the Society was held November 12, 1896. The President, Dr. de Schweinitz, was in the chair, with fourteen members present. A communication from the Medical Society of the District of Columbia was read, in which the Chemical Society was requested to appoint a representative on a Joint Commission on Vivisection. The commission is to be charged with the duty of investigation relating to the practice of animal experimentation in the District of Columbia, and the representation before Congress of the constituent organizations (The Medical Society of the District of Columbia, the Bureaus of Medicine and Surgery of the Army, Navy, Marine Hospital Service and Animal Industry, the Medical Departments of the Columbian, Georgetown, Howard and National Universities, and the Chemical, Biological, Anthropological, Entomological and Philosophical Societies of the District of Columbia).

The first paper of the evening was on 'Poisonous Honey,' by V. K. Chesnut, who referred to the literature, and enumerated several recent cases of poisoning which happened in New Jersey and North Carolina. Reports of other poisonous honeys had been received from Texas and California.

The principal cases were ascribed to honey derived from the laurels (*Kalmia latifolia* and *Kalmia angustifolia*). A new method of detecting the presence of andromedotoxin in honey was described and specimens were exhibited of poisonous honey and the plants from which it was derived.

The discussion of Mr. Chesnut's paper was by Prof. Stokes, Munroe and Seaman and Dr. de Schweinitz. Prof. Stokes asked if the flower

of the horse chestnut was known to be poisonous to bees. Mr. Chesnut was not aware of the fact, but thought it possible; the flowers of the Judas tree have a similar reputation. Prof. Munroe spoke of the honey locust, Prof. Seaman of the possible evaporation of gelsemine from gelsemium honey, and Dr. deSchweinitz cited a historical case of poisoning which happened in Asia Minor.

The second paper was by Dr. de Schweinitz, on 'A Convenient Lamp for Generating Formaldehyde Gas and Acetic Aldehyde.' Several forms of lamps in working order were exhibited. Ordinary lamps are used, but the upper part of the wick is supplemented by a piece of plantinized asbestos. The cotton wick is turned high enough to light. After burning a minute or so the platinized asbestos begins to glow and the flame is extinguished. The glow continues till the alcohol is exhausted. The decomposition is simple. With methyl alcohol, formaldehyde and water are the chief products; with ethyl alcohol, they are acetaldehyde and water.

Traces of carbonic, formic and acetic acids are also present in the reaction. Dr. Fireman asked what the yield of aldehyde was. Dr. de Schweinitz replied that he did not have the exact figures at hand, but that he obtained about three-fourths of the theoretical yield.

A. C. PEALE,  
*Secretary.*

NEW BOOKS.

*Handbuch der Physiologischen Optik.* H. VON HELMHOLTZ. Zweite umgearbeitete Auflage. Hamburg und Leipzig, Leopold Voss. 1895-6. Parts 11, 12, 13-17.

*Primitive Travel and Transportation.* OTIS TUFTON MASON. Washington, Government Printing Office. 1896. Pp. 593.

*Auto Cars.* D. FARMAN. Translated from the French by LUCIEN SERRAILLER. London, Whittaker & Co.; New York, The Macmillan Company. 1896. Pp. 249. \$1.50.

*Charles Darwin and the Theory of Natural Selection.* EDWARD B. POULTON. New York, The Macmillan Company. 1896. Pp. vi. + 224. \$1.25.