

AMERICAN INDUSTRIES.—No. 68.

PROPRIETARY SPECIALTIES.

While the production of that class of articles known as proprietary specialties may involve no machinery or processes not in common use by all manufacturers of drugs, chemicals, and the like, the business of advertising and selling them in a large and successful way does involve industrial operations of such magnitude and completeness of organization as to bring the business fairly within the scope of great industries. And since the business methods developed in creating and supplying a world-wide market for a proprietary specialty are in a large measure applicable to the work of making known any article of manufacture the general use of which is desired, a study of the operations of a representative house in this branch of trade must have at least a suggestive value to all manufacturers whose products are capable of winning general acceptance if properly placed before the public. The accompanying illustrations exhibit the principal departments of the business of Messrs. A. Vogeler & Co., Baltimore, Md., one of the largest manufacturers of proprietary specialties in the country. The offices and works of the firm are situated on West Lombard street (Nos. 184 and 186), and run back the distance of a long business block to a shipping street in the rear. The main building has a front of fifty feet, is four stories high above ground, and is constructed of pressed brick with Ohio stone trimmings. In the front part of the ground floor is a suite of admirably appointed offices, beautifully fitted up and handsomely furnished. The reception parlor is especially noticeable for the richness of its furnishings and its perfection of comfort.

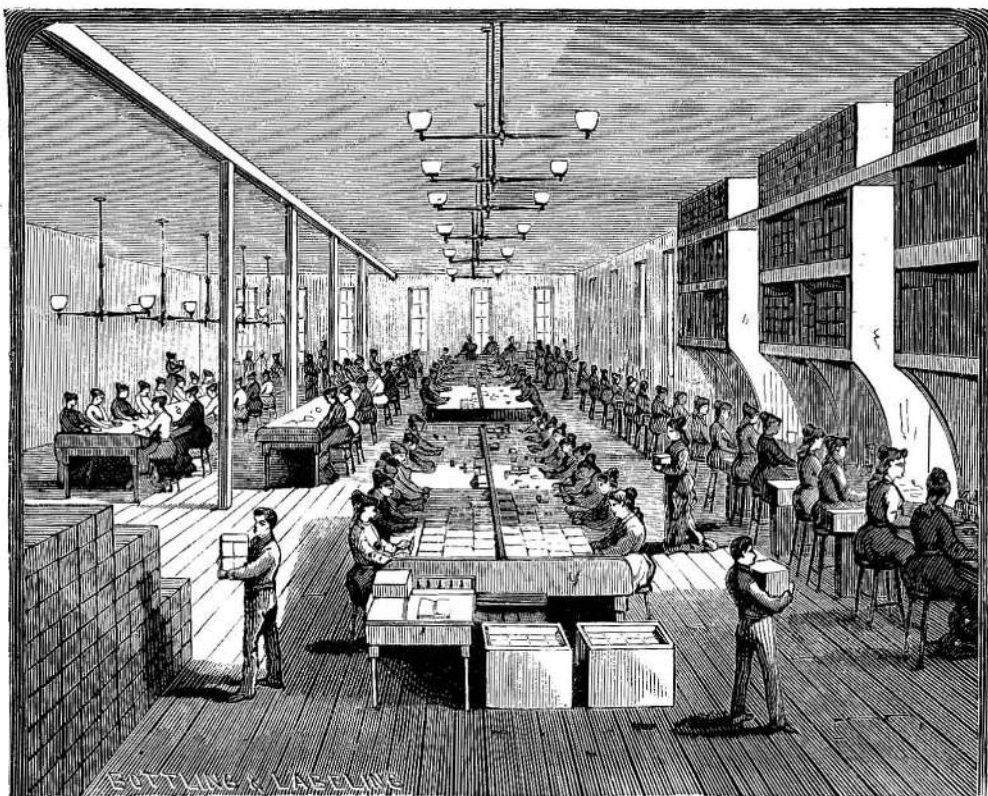
Along the front hall are grouped the offices of the managing partner, his private secretary, and the cashier, separated from the other departments on the same floor



by a plate glass partition. On the further side of this partition is the literary department, to which the corps of translators, and the staff of correspondents and reporters throughout the world, submit their work for revision and approval, and where the advertisements and other work pertaining to the department are prepared. The offices of this department contain a comprehensive and carefully selected library of books and periodicals, and in all their appointments would do credit to any publishing house. On the same floor is the mailing supply department, where a corps of lady assistants make ready for the mails the vast correspondence of the house, circulars, documents, and the like. The shipping department, bindery, box factory, frame and show-card factory, etc., are in the rear building, which is three-fourths the size of the main structure; also a large fireproof storage vault for chemicals and an extra laboratory.

The main laboratory is on the fourth floor of the front building, connected with the extra laboratory by a bridge or corridor. Here, as shown in our illustration, are the retorts, stills, and condensers, percolators and funnels, stock and distributing cans, and other appointments of a well-ordered laboratory, with ample facilities for the swift and easy handling of crude products and completed preparations, particularly the St. Jacobs Oil, which is the chief specialty of Messrs.

Vogeler & Co. The employes of the laboratory are under the training and supervision of a skillful chemist, who assays every constituent of the Oil to insure uniformity in the product. The finished Oil, after the final filtering, is run into large supply cans, whence it is drawn into patent bottling machines in its passage to the bottling and labeling department.



The distinguishing feature of the house, however, and the one in which it takes great pride, is the advertising department, the administration of which is a vast business by itself. This department occupies the second floor of the main building. Approaching this floor by an ample stairway from the front one passes through a wide hall, from which, at right angles, a narrower hall leads to the manager's office. This office, like those on the main floor, is one of a communicating series, and is well equipped and comfortably furnished as to decoration and fitting, the floor being covered with Brussels carpet and the walls with pictures. Adjoining are the offices of the stenographic reporters, corresponding clerks, and bookkeepers, all perfectly appointed. Separated from the offices by a handsome walnut and ground glass partition is a spacious room, 90 by 50 feet, which is devoted to the filing and control of newspapers. This room contains 10,000 pigeon-holes, each one having over the top a small sliding sign, upon which is printed the name of the paper for which it is intended. Every paper in which the advertisements of this house appear comes regularly to this department, and is carefully examined, marked, entered, and filed. A corps of lady clerks are engaged in this special service, under the supervision of a gentleman of long experience in such matters. All derelictions on the part of advertising papers are reported to the manager, who at once presents his complaint to the paper in fault.

The unvarying courtesy exhibited toward publishers, and the exceptional method of paying advertising bills without waiting for the rendering of statements, have established the most cordial relations between the press and the house. No house could be more strict and exacting in its demands, and surely none is more prompt in fulfilling its obligations.

The system of book-keeping, carrying on correspondence and conducting newspaper advertising which obtains here, is original in conception and execution. Of the many thousands of letters and documents always on file, any one of them, whether unimportant or otherwise, can be instantly referred to, considered, and returned to its proper place. A daily and weekly permanent account is kept with every paper in which the advertisements of the house appear, and at a

single glance the exact state of the work is comprehended. This system involves the maintenance of a set of large books—22 in number—containing over 12,000 accounts, for the preservation of which a safe specially constructed is provided. Every letter and every contract is dictated to stenographic correspondents by the manager, and thus the vast amount of correspondence is practically under the control of a single head. The house points with especial pride to the expressed opinions of reliable advertising experts that its advertising department has not its equal anywhere. As an evidence, we cite from the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* on this point. "In its magnitude, conception, system, and originality it is vastly superior to anything of the kind in America. Any one familiar with this kind of business can understand the vast amount of detail in such a department, and only such can appreciate the tact and business ability that systematized and organized it so perfectly."

"Every possible convenience to facilitate business is here seen. Speaking tubes, dumb waiters for communicating with the various other departments, libraries of reference, safes for the preservation of valuable documents and books, and other conveniences are provided.

The bottling and labeling department is situated in the main building, and is noticeable chiefly for the swift and very expeditious manner in which the product is prepared for the dealer after leaving the hands of the compounders. Connected with the main supply cans in the laboratory by tin lined pipes, are ball-faucet boxes with adjustable automatic stop cocks governing the flow of the liquid through which the oil runs into patent bottle filling machines. One attendant to each machine is kept constantly busy in removing the bottles as they become filled.

The bottles come to the filling room from the factory ready for immediate use. After they have been filled as described,



they are removed in large trays to the corking tables, where they are securely corked and passed on to the long labeling tables. Here young ladies deftly handle the bottles, applying to each the regular label, wrap round it a circular of directions in eleven languages, and put on it an attractive lithographed wrapper. The finished bottles, in immense heaps, are then carried along to the packing tables and placed in machine-made wooden boxes, one dozen bottles in each box, and these boxes are then packed in a stout wooden case, each containing six of the smaller boxes or one-half a gross of the article ready for shipment.

One of the most interesting features of the whole establishment is the printing department. It is in the basement of the main structure, and is well appointed in every respect and admirably ventilated. Windows admit the light from three sides, and the apartment is wainscoted in solid wood. Here the printing of the house is done, for which purpose thirteen steam presses are kept running day and night, printing labels, posters, medical almanacs, and advertising work of every description, including a very considerable amount of "color" work, etc., all of which is "set up" by their own positors. This advertising matter is furnished to patrons in eleven languages. In this department binding, stitching,

