

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Móra László: A Budapesti Műszaki Egyetem Kémiai Technológiai Tanszékének százéves története**

(Centennial History of the Department of Chemical Technology, Technical University, Budapest) BME Központi Könyvtára, Műszaki Tudománytörténeti Kiadványok, 23. Budapest, 1975. (p. 305, pictures 50)

In the history of an university department hundred years are quite a long time, and especially long in the case of a department for chemical technology. During this century this branch of science underwent enormous development, so that it cannot be compared to that of hundred years ago. In 1870, there was practically no chemical industry in Hungary. Establishment of the Department of Chemical Technology was a progressive step, similar to many others in the history of the Technical University. Actually, the chemical industry is one of the most powerful branches of the national economy enjoying an abrupt development since our liberation in 1945.

At all times the function of the department has to be referred to the actual industry in this country, as well as to the world level. No doubt, it was a more difficult task previously to meet requirements. The consecutive heads of the Department, however, always did their best for the improvement, ensuring thereby their places in the Pantheon of the Hungarian science. And how different personalities they were! There were two types of scientists: the romantic ones who sympathized with arts; like Vince Wartha, Mór Korach; and the realistic ones, such as Ignác Pfeifer and József Varga.

László Móra, author of several biographies has merits in the Hungarian literature of the history of chemistry. He knows very well history, and the original documents of the Technical University, and detected great many new data. To write the history of an institution is a less promising task than to compose a biography. Namely, a man is a more interesting subject for a book than is a building or dry scientific results. Móra succeeded in writing a lively section on Pfeifer, giving detailed, so far unpublished information on events in the period after the Hungarian soviet republic.

Móra's book is dealing with the history of one of our most important chemical institutions containing great many new information, and enriches not only the literature on the history of chemistry but also that of the history of science and education.

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