

# 19th century textbook illustrations

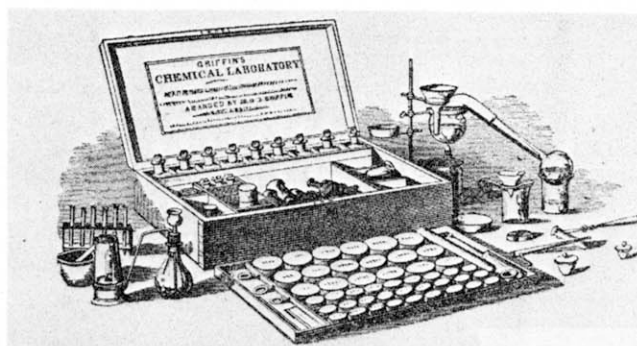


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## Griffin's Portable Chemical Cabinet

The earliest ancestor of the chemistry set, excluding portable kits for chemical analysis, appears to have been a "chemical cabinet or chest" designed by the German chemist J. F. A. Götting about 1789 (1). It contained a booklet describing about 150 experiments and was recommended for the use of students who did not have access to professional demonstrations. The first chemistry sets specifically designed for amateurs were probably offered for sale by F. Accum, who began selling "recreational cabinets for philosophical amusement" in London about 1800 (2). The illustration shown here is from the 1866 catalog of John Joseph Griffin and shows the largest of six chemistry sets which his firm offered for sale for the home amateur (3). The catalog also carried sets of chemicals and apparatus required by chemistry students at the Royal College of Chemistry, and Guys Hospital, and for students taking the Oxford and Cambridge local exams in practical chemistry. Another important type of cabinet was designed for the school master. These either contained a general collection of chemicals and apparatus or a selection



tailored to the experiments and demonstrations found in one of the popular texts of the period.

### Literature Cited

- (1) Smeaton, W. A., *Ambix*, XIII(2), 84 (1966).
- (2) Accum, F., "A Descriptive Catalogue of the Apparatus and Instruments Employed in Experimental and Operative Chemistry," F. Accum, London, 1817, p. 46.
- (3) Griffin, J. J., "Chemical Handicraft: A Classified and Descriptive Catalogue of Chemical Apparatus," London, 1866, p. 405.