

# 19th century textbook illustrations



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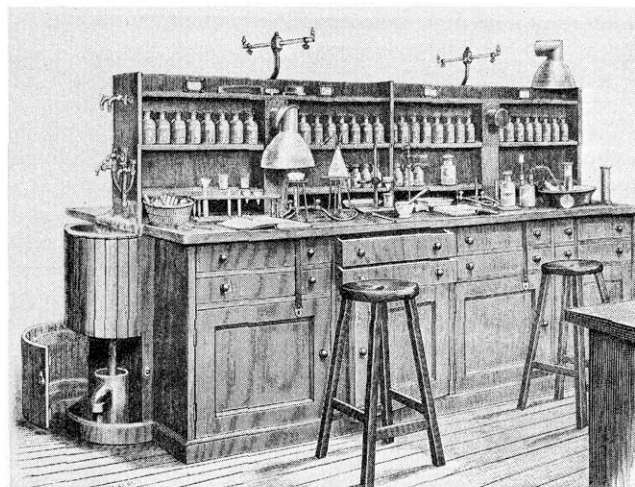
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## Laboratory Fittings

The illustration is the frontispiece from Clowes' "A Treatise on Practical Chemistry"<sup>1</sup> and shows a laboratory bench with four work spaces of the type used in the Nottingham University College laboratories about 1885. The sinks were made of stoneware and discharged into stoneware pots, the overflow of which then went down the drain pipes. This device was used to trap solid wastes and to prevent clogging. The trap pots were emptied every few days. Loose wooden grids were placed in the sinks to help prevent breakage from dropping wet glassware.

Each work space had a copper hood painted with black corrosion-proof paint. When a space wasn't in use, its hood aperture was stopped with a wooden plug to improve the draught at the other benches. The benches themselves were made of American walnut and the tops either well oiled or covered with sheet lead.

Most of the apparatus shown on the bench is familiar to the modern chemist with the possible exception of the two-necked Woulffe bottle used for the gas generator and the long bottle laying on the top shelf. The latter was called an indigo prism. It was filled with a solution of indigo in sulfuric acid and held in front of the eyes when doing flame tests, serving the same function as a piece of cobalt glass.



## Literature cited

Clowes, F., "A Treatise on Practical Chemistry and Qualitative Inorganic Analysis," Lea Brothers, Philadelphia, 1885, pp. 315-316.