or oily matter which may be present in the solution to which such test is applied. This can generally be accomplished by shaking such solution with a little pure hard fat, at its fusing-point, and removing the crust which forms on cooling.

In conclusion, I would desire to point out to you that by some of the facts above stated may be explained that difference which has arisen between Reynoso and Schiff respecting the character of the precipitate produced by adding water to alcohol in which has long been dissolved mercuro-iodide; the former has stated it to be red; the latter, to be yellow—a discrepancy which is readily susceptible of explanation upon the very likely assumption that in the case where such precipitate is yellow, an oil was present in the alcohol used.

ART. LXVI.—*On the Decomposition of Argentic-oxide by Mercury.* By WILLIAM SKEY, Analyst to the Geological Survey Department.

[*Read before the Wellington Philosophical Society, 21st February*, 1880.]

UPON the authority of Fisher it is now supposed that argentic-oxide is not decomposed by mercury; but I find that, when these two substances are kept for some weeks in contact, whether in light or not, a considerable quantity of silver amalgamates with the mercury, and a crust of yellow mercuro-oxide is formed, demonstrating that this silver compound is divested of its oxygen by mercury, but at a very slow rate of speed. The same decomposition takes place if the two substances are kept immersed in caustic potash.