

SCIENCE

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THE SPIRIT OF ALCHEMY IN MODERN
INDUSTRY

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NEVER in the history of the world has there been such a time of intense human activity as the present: never a time of such gigantic undertakings, such marvelous achievements. Notwithstanding, the curve of progress is still an ascending one; although for some nations it has run parallel to its axis for many centuries, yet nowhere on the earth is there not at present a marked break in the line which for so long has represented a monotonous level in human affairs.

While there has been remarkable progress in ethics, culture and the fine arts, this world movement in human endeavor is epitomized in the expression "modern industry." Of the many factors which have entered into the advance in industry as a whole, possibly the most important is found in the manufacture and use of power. Where once we measured results by what a man could do, or later what a horse could do, now we measure the power at our command by thousands of kilowatts. We have had an age of steam, and we are passing through an age of electricity, and what next? Many think it will be an age of unprecedented chemical development. We have reason to be well satisfied with our present achievements; we do things so much more quickly and on so much larger a scale than our ancestors did. But at this enviable rate we can see the end of our resources—coal, timber, iron ore, are already measured in years. We must improve our present methods. We must inaugurate along every line of great endeavor a systematic search for new