

### THE COLLEGE PROFESSOR AND HIS PAY

THE following extracts are from the preface of Professor Plotnikow's "Lehrbuch der Photochemie":

While devoting myself entirely to the study of photochemistry, I came gradually to the conviction that this new and rapidly growing field of research could no longer do without a thorough compilation of its literature and fundamental underlying principles. The production of a manual of photochemistry as complete as possible therefore seemed to be a scientific necessity in furthering investigations in this field. The first stone towards the realization of this structure was laid in 1910 with the publication of my "Photochemie." This was followed in 1912 by my "Versuchstechnik"; and in 1914 the manuscript of my "Photochemische Practicum" was completed in Moscow. Thanks to the political situation existing at that time, this last work was never published. Some of its material, however, is embodied in the present "Text-book of Photochemistry," which endeavors to give the latest results together with the viewpoint and theories of this little investigated field, and which is now made accessible to those engaged in photochemical research as well as to those physicists and chemists interested in the phenomena of this branch of science.

Unfortunately the original plan of compiling and publishing a manual on the subject can not now be carried out, chiefly on account of the political events of the last five years linked to my own unfavorable personal circumstances. The historical material necessary was not at hand, and the libraries, the indispensable aid to every fundamental work, were no longer at my disposition. Moreover, my own experiences that affected deeply the trend of my speculative investigations were wholly of a negative nature; so that only through a struggle for self-forgiveness and endurance was a way found to bring the work, even in much abbreviated form, to the light of day.

The composition of the present book and the working over of the great amount of accumulated material, was undertaken by me in the summer of 1917 at my country place "Schwartz See" in the government of Riasan. All about the place swarmed bands of every breed of idle Russian folk. Day after day I was obliged to sit helplessly by and witness the violent plunder and destruction by the subordinates of Kerensky and Tscheonoff of my farm that had cost me so much pains, labor and money to bring to its high degree of economic production. Finally, in November of the same year the place was levelled to the ground. My private library was called upon to furnish cigarette papers. My family found asylum in a miserable little room in Moscow. Here under continuous artillery and musket fire of the Bolshevik insurrectionists, the constant fear inspired by them and the distress of hunger, the work on the book had to be carried on. Sad and toilsome enough were the hours so won for its composition. The scientific library that I had been years in collecting gradually melted away; for the books had to be exchanged for the daily bread to keep body and soul to-

gether. I had already been relieved of my position as university professor in the first days of the revolution (March 20, 1913) by the arbitrary, lawless and violent methods of the Minister of Education, Cadet Manuiloff, who could endure in educational positions only people of his particular political stripe. And so the first Russian laboratory for photochemistry that I had been at great pains, and partly at my own expense, to establish, was also abolished. As the food question became more and more acute, and as all sources began to fail, we fled in fear of our lives from this social paradise in the fall of 1918 to our relatives in the Ukraine. The mathematical part of the present work was done at Charkoff. But the Bolshevik wave of blood and hunger drew near and menaced also the rich and beautiful Ukraine, threatening its destruction and cutting me off again from the world of culture. In the name of the new social justice I have been made a wandering beggar, while others physically stronger than myself have been enriched at my expense; my scientific home was forfeited to me. Whether fate would again grant me such another home where I could carry on my scientific work quietly and unmolested seemed questionable; for, alas, among scientists party and national prejudice play a larger part than anywhere else. My position was indeed precarious. Then at last came help from Germany. Thanks to the timely interference of German scientific and technical men, it was made possible for me to go to Germany; and on Christmas, 1918, in Leipzig, to be surrounded by my German friends and well-wishers. Unfortunately, it was not possible for my wife and child to accompany me. They were obliged to remain in Charkoff; and thanks to the short-sighted and naïve policy of the entente for two years I was unable to communicate with my family.

But on German soil, so favorable to every scientific undertaking, it was made possible for me to bring to completion the present work. It is only a text-book, to be sure, and not a manual as originally planned; yet I believe it offers sufficient material to the present workers in this field to make possible further successful development in this so interesting scientific and practical line of research. I hope the book may be the means of adding to my old friends many new ones and that its unevenness of form and content may be attributed to their true cause. Never, I think, were the working out of new scientific problems attended by such unbearable conditions as those under which the present book was largely produced.

Hunger, misery, want, personal insecurity often approaching fear for one's life were the constant accompaniment of my labor; so that during the long time of its composition, the necessary repose for the mind and freedom from disturbance for thought were out of the question. Only the rigid will to rescue the offspring of my scientific activity from the surrounding chaos overcame the outward difficulties and provided the strength and inspiration for further effort, thus permitting me finally to bring to a favorable conclusion the correlated ideas resulting from my investigations.

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