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## THE UNITY OF LIFE<sup>1</sup>

HUMAN kind is slow to learn; what it acquires in one generation it loses in the next. Great truths evolving from everyday experience make but difficult way into the consciousness of the average person and eventuate but seldom in guided action. Nations rise and fall into decay and others follow the same course to the same end without profit from the evil example. For every generation and every individual, constant repetitions of the most elementary truths are required to save them from destructive courses. A mental cataclysm such as the recent war brought upon us is followed by questionings of all faiths and beliefs and even of evidences. All the old superstitions and instincts suffer a recrudescence. Intolerance and ignorance, but lightly held at bay even under the best of conditions, insinuate themselves anew into the thoughts of people and color their acts. Impulses which, in our pride, we thought were eradicated from the human mind rise out of the murk of the past and obtrude themselves upon our startled vision. The very foundations of civilization are indeed shaken in some countries.

Little wonder then that amid all this questioning and striving the conclusions of science are brought down into the dust of the market place and made the playthings of the ignorant. At a time when science is proclaimed the chief reliance of organized society in securing its perpetuation; when through its ministrations human life is materially lengthened, made more effective and enjoyable; when the uncertainties of existence and the terrors of the unknown are yearly being reduced in significance, then we witness the paradox of vicious and unreasoning assaults upon the methods and conclusions of science by legislative enactments to cripple its progress and to limit its teaching. It would seem from all this that science is in our day and generation, but not of it. This is no doubt largely the fault of scientists who have ever been inclined to become absorbed in the pursuit of knowledge and to manifest little concern with the use that is to be made of it. In extreme cases there are men who take pride in the thought

<sup>1</sup> Address given on the occasion of the installation of a chapter of Sigma Xi at New York University on March 20, 1926.

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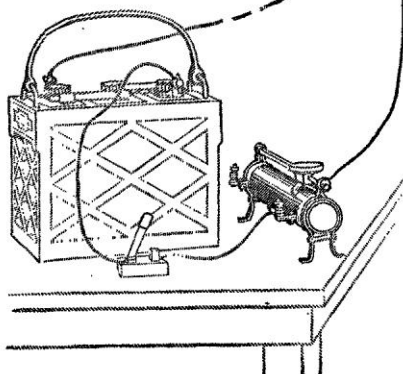
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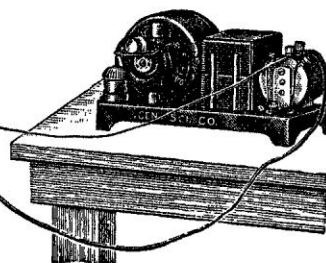
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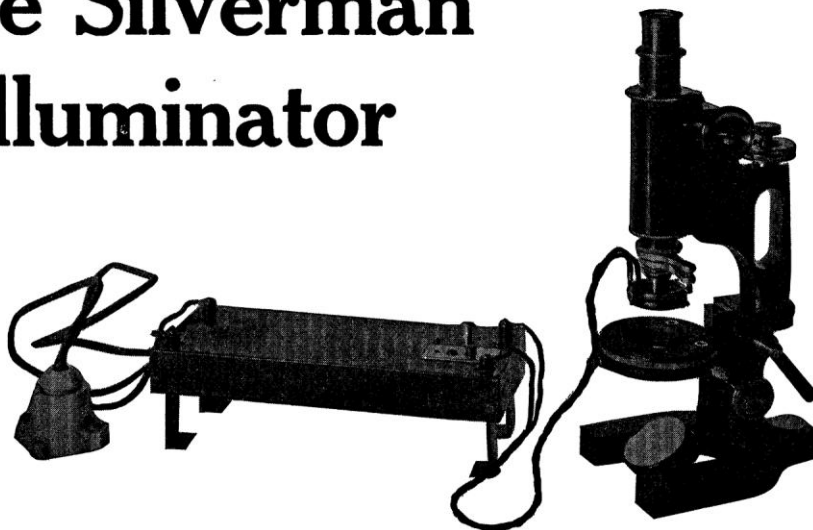
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