# SCIENCE

Vol. 83	FRIDAY, JU	NE 5, 1936	No. 2162
The American Association for the Advancement Science:  Nuclear Chemistry, the Neutron and Arta Radioactivity: Professor William D. Hard Obituary: Charles Velmar Green: C. C. L. Scientific Events: The British National Human Heredity Commit The Summer Symposium on Theoretical Physical the University of Michigan; National Research lowships in Physics, Chemistry and Mathema Award of the Chandler Medal to Professor Gian In Honor of Professor Osborn; Award of the Hundred and Fifty Thousandth Bausch and In Microscope to Professor Novy  Scientific Notes and News Discussion: Is Geology a Science?: Dr. Chester K. W. Worth. A Plea to Publishers of Scientific Bosion of Rules of Nomenclature in Certain C. Dr. C. W. Stiles Scientific Books: The Migrations of Animals: Dr. Robert C. Man Murphy. North American Fossils: Pr. Societies and Meetings: The Southwestern Division of the American ciation for the Advancement of Science: Veckiech. The Minnesota Academy of Science:	d Artificial D. HARKINS 533  543  Committee; l Physics at esearch Felathematics; or Giauque; of the Two and Lomb  543  K. Went-	FESSOR H. K. WILSON. The Ohio Academy of ence: WILLIAM H. ALEXANDER  Reports: Report of the President of the National Research Council of Canada Special Articles: Synthesis of Substances of Possible Physiolog Activity: Professor L. F. Fieser and Other Potassium: A Basal Factor in the Syndrome Corticoadrenal Insufficiency: Professor R. Zwemer and Dr. Richard Truszkowski. Diet Production and Prevention of Anemia in Lateral Amblystoma: Esther M. Patch Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods: Differential Staining of Thick Sections of Tisse Madeline Kneberg. A Convenient Resistance Determination of Redox Potentials in Biolog Fluids: Monroe E. Freeman Science News  SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Ament of Science, edited by J. McKeen Cattell a lished every Friday by  THE SCIENCE PRESS New York City: Grand Central Terminal Lancaster, Pa. Garriso: Annual Subscription, \$6.00 Single Copies, SCIENCE is the official organ of the American tion for the Advancement of Science. Information ing membership in the Association may be secur the office of the permanent secretary, in the Smi	arch  orical  ERS. e of Li. ttary trval  cross of cross o
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## NUCLEAR CHEMISTRY, THE NEUTRON AND ARTIFICIAL RADIOACTIVITY<sup>1</sup>

By Professor WILLIAM D. HARKINS

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

#### (1) Introduction

NUCLEAR chemistry is just a decade old, yet it is now the most active of all the special branches of science. Nuclear reactions are very similar to ordinary chemical reactions, except that they deal with matter which is a million million times more dense than ordinary matter, and on this account the forces are extremely high and the energies involved are a million times greater than those of ordinary atomic chemistry.

1 Address presented before Section C of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the St. Louis Section of the American Chemical Society, St. Louis, January 1, 1936. The section on deuterium (heavy hydrogen) has been omitted, and in its place an abstract of a paper "Deuterium as a Reagent in Nuclear Chemistry" presented at the April meeting of the American Chemical Society, has been substituted.

The purpose of this address is to outline some of the nuclear work done at the University of Chicago and especially to emphasize the point of view developed during the last few years, which is that only reactions of the chemical type occur among nuclei. Thus atoms may be artificially synthesized, but not artificially disintegrated.

Thus when two atomic nuclei meet they first combine to form a new nucleus, which on account of its large content of energy is unstable and therefore has a life which is short in large scale time, but not excessively short on a nuclear time scale. This intermediate product nucleus may then disintegrate in any one of a number of ways, which depend upon the nature and state of the metastable nucleus. Thus the disintegra-

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#### Vol. 21

#### Contents for March-June, 1936

No. 2

WM. M. SHANKLIN. Anthropology of the Akeydat and the Maualy Bedouin.

- T. D. STEWART. The musculature of the anthropoids: I. Neck and trunk. Nine text figures.
- E. REYNOLDS AND E. A. HOOTON. Relation of the pelvis to erect posture. Three text figures.
- J. GILLMAN. Research opportunities in South Africa.
- M. KNEBERG. Hair weight as a racial criterion.
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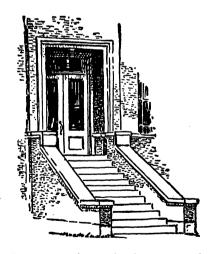
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