

## SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

## THE ORGANIC CHEMISTRY OF NITROGEN

*The Organic Chemistry of Nitrogen.* By NEVIL VINCENT SIDGWICK, F.R.S. New edition. Revised and rewritten by T. W. J. Taylor and Wilson Baker. The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1937; pp. xix + 590; 6½ × 10 in.; price, \$8.50 bound.

THE new edition of this valuable treatise appears very appropriately in our own country only a few months prior to the arrival of its distinguished author, who is to deliver the Maiben lecture before the American Association for the Advancement of Science at its Denver meeting on June 23.

Since the appearance of the first edition, in 1910, the work has been recognized as an authoritative review and critical discussion of that great division of organic chemistry with which it deals. As explained at that time, the purpose of the book is primarily educational, and it is not intended in any sense as a work of reference. Hence it does not attempt to cover the whole vast domain of nitrogenous organic chemistry, but rather to select those portions which seem most important, either because of their theoretical interest or for other reasons, and to discuss these in considerable detail.

Professor Sidgwick realized many years ago that the enormous expansion of our knowledge in this field made a revision of his book highly desirable, and in 1922 began the undertaking, with the intention of enlisting the collaboration of some of his Oxford colleagues and thus making it a cooperative effort. By the close of 1933, he had completed the first draft of four of the eighteen chapters. It then became evident that the increasing duties and responsibilities of all kinds devolving upon him as the result of his selection for so many positions of honor and distinction would postpone indefinitely the completion of a task which was daily growing more difficult.

In 1934, therefore, the completion of the revision was entrusted to the capable hands of Drs. Taylor and Baker, both fellows of Oxford University, the one of Brasenose and the other of Queen's College, and the book under review is the result. In its compilation, the authors have had the benefit of the material accumulated by those other colleagues who, from time to time, had aided Professor Sidgwick.

The major grouping of the subject-matter into the four divisions—I. Compounds with no nitrogen directly attached to carbon; II. Bodies containing one nitrogen atom attached to carbon; III. Compounds containing an open chain of two or more nitrogen atoms, and IV. Ring compounds—has been abandoned,

although, in the main, the chapter headings, sequence and subject-matter remain much the same. The text as a whole has been not only thoroughly revised but also largely rewritten. The book opens with an introduction by Professor Sidgwick on "The Nitrogen Atom," and "Resonance."

As compared with the first edition, the following changes will be noted: (1) the amino acids have been assigned a separate chapter; (2) the aliphatic diazo compounds and derivatives of hydrazoic acid have been removed from Division IV and now constitute Chapter XI, immediately preceding the hydrazine derivatives; semicarbazide and related compounds, formerly given in Division III, now appear with the other carbonic acid derivatives in Chapter IX; the uric acid derivatives and the pyridine alkaloids have been omitted. On the other hand, the discussion of quinoline derivatives has been considerably extended, and now includes such important topics as the cyanine dyes, reactive methyl groups, acridine and phenanthridine. In the chapter (VIII) on nitro compounds, Mr. D. L. Hammick contributed the section on the molecular complexes of aromatic nitro compounds, and Professor Sidgwick that on chelate *o*-nitrophenol derivatives.

To the literature of its field, it is an outstanding and valuable contribution, and one which should be in the library of every one interested in organic chemistry.

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## LIFE HISTORIES

*Criteria for the Life History, with Analyses of Six Notable Documents.* By JOHN DOLLARD. Yale University Press. v and 288 pp. 1935.

It is difficult accurately to review a book which is obscurely written. John Dollard has a large vocabulary which he uses with prolixity but without precision. For example, he quotes Adler as saying that the mother helps the child and usually pampers her, and he comments thereon (pp. 49, 51, 67) in a manner which indicates that he does not know what "pampers" means and thus misses the significance of the quotation. Again, he has a fondness for the plural noun "surrogates," but I am unable to substitute any definition of the term I have thus far found in the dictionaries for the word where he uses it. The proper use of shall and will, of should and would, is of course difficult even for a discriminating writer; yet without being too much of a purist one may feel that the readers at the Yale University Press might have clarified some of the author's sentences by querying his usage