

Nature provides an automatic compensating mechanism, such that if material progress is too rapid, suffering results which accelerates spiritual progress.

And in another place:

Civilization contains innate self-stabilizing influences. Society has certain problems to solve and definite lessons to learn. The function of science is to speed up this learning process. If modern wars seem more terrible, it is because we are learning our lessons faster and overcoming more rapidly those obstacles to human progress which must be met in any case.

Certainly no one will doubt that scientific research provides means which may be used for human progress, but that there is any automatic mechanism to insure that these means will be so used is a debatable thesis, doubted by many thoughtful and well-informed people. It was a good while ago but already within the age of modern technology that John Stuart Mill wrote: "Hitherto it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being." Most of us would doubtless count this an exaggeration. But I think we should find it harder to dismiss the opinion of Henry George, that "the new forces [of material progress], elevating in their nature though they be, do not act upon the social fabric from underneath, as was for a long time hoped and believed, but strike it at a point intermediate between top and bottom. It is as though an immense wedge were being forced, not underneath society, but through society. Those who are above the point of separation are elevated, but those who are below are crushed down." And indeed one can not help wondering whether what the world has now would pass for civilization with Socrates, let us say, or Pascal or, for that matter, with any barefoot and illiterate South Sea Islander caught between the bombs and shellfire of the technically advanced nations.

But, in any case, it is to be hoped that "Atoms in Action" will have many new readers. They will find that nature is not niggardly of either her secrets or her riches, and the world can be made incomparably

better by knowledge, employed with good-will. And if, like this reviewer, they can not share Professor Harrison's optimistic belief that this will happen automatically, they may be moved themselves to try to make it come true.

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ORGANIC SYNTHESSES

Organic Syntheses. Vol. 24. An annual publication of satisfactory methods for the preparation of organic chemicals. NATHAN L. DRAKE, editor-in-chief, with an editorial board and an advisory board. Pp. 119. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd. 1944. \$2.00.

THE syntheses described in this new volume of this important series are the following: Acenaphthenequinone, Aminoacetal, 4-Amino-2,6-dimethylpyrimidine, *dl*- α -Amino- α -phenylpropionic acid, 4-Amino-1,2,4-triazole, Benzoyl cyanide, Benzoylformic acid, *tert*-Butyl acetate, *o*-Chlorobromobenzene, ω -Chloroisnitrosoacetophenone, 2-Chlorolepidine, 1-Chloromethyl-naphthalene, Coumarilic acid, Cyclopropanecarboxylic acid, *nor*-Desoxycholic acid, 3,12-Diacetoxibis-*nor*-cholanyldiphenylethylene, γ -Di-*n*-butylaminopropylamine, 2,6-Dichloroaniline and 2,6-dibromoaniline, Diphenyldiazomethane, Ethyl diazoacetate, Ethyl hydrazinecarboxylate and diaminobiuret, Ethyl-N-tricarboxylate, Glyoxal bisulfite, 4(5)-Hydroxymethylimidazole hydrochloride, 4-Methylcarbostyryl, 4-Methylcoumarin, Methyl pyruvate, *o*-Nitrobenzaldehyde, *p*-Nitrobenzyl acetate, *p*-Nitrobenzyl alcohol, Phenylmethylglycidic ester, 1-Phenylnaphthalene, α -Phenylpropionaldehyde, Selenophenol, Sorbic acid, Undecyl isocyanate, Vinylacetic acid.

The concluding subject index covers volumes 20-24.

In other respects the volume is exactly like its predecessors, Vol. 23 having been reviewed somewhat more fully in SCIENCE of August 27, 1943, page 200.

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REPORTS

THE NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

It is extraordinarily encouraging how the affairs of the Zoological Society progress even during the stress of this war. Public interest, together with the moral and financial support coming in from many quarters, is evidence of the importance and permanence of the things that this institution stands for and of its potentialities in the future.

¹ Address of Fairfield Osborn before the New York Zoological Society, January 9, 1945.

Usually at these meetings it is the president's duty to report to the members as to the past year's happenings. With your permission I shall only do this most briefly and then go on to consider some plans and ideas for the future.

THE YEAR 1944

The year 1944 again gave us confidence to believe that our services provided real contributions to public