



Clothes Moth

WHENEVER furs and woollens are brought out of home storage, comes one of the regularly recurring little crises of the housewife's year. Each piece must be anxiously inspected for holes or chewed places, and for the tell-tale little pupa cases in which the hungry marauders have lived. And woe to any small moth, whatever be its species, that flutters across the sight of the zealous guardian of the family's wearables. With a frantic swoop and a smacking of hands she encompasses the luckless insect's annihilation.

As a matter of fact, however, it doesn't do much good to kill flying moths. Most of them are not clothes moths anyway, and even those that are clothes moths are not themselves cloth-eaters. They only lay the eggs that hatch into wool-hungry "worms" or larvae.

According to investigators of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, many of the "moth-proofing" sprays are somewhat over-recommended by their manufacturers. The compounds used really will make things moth-proof, but in order to do so the fabrics or furs must be

either soaked or steamed with them; mere spraying will not stop the attacks completely though it will in many cases reduce the likelihood of moth attack very materially. But the advertisers should not claim full moth-proofing from a sprayed application, say the government entomologists.

Science News Letter, January 21, 1933

CHEMISTRY

Chemical Award Recognizes Synthesis of Alcohol

THE CHANDLER MEDAL for 1933 has been awarded to Dr. George Oliver Curme, Jr., research director of the Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Corporation, New York, in recognition of his synthesis and large-scale production of many aliphatic chemical compounds, such as fatty acids, hydrocarbons, alcohols, esters and ethers.

Most striking was Dr. Curme's manufacture of synthetic ethyl alcohol, put into large scale production in 1930, thus competing seriously with the ancient process of making this ordinary alcohol from fermentation of grain or molasses.

The prize committee chairman, Prof. Arthur W. Hixson of Columbia, termed Dr. Curme "one of the greatest living exponents of aliphatic chemistry" and he declared that Dr. Curme "perhaps heads the list of those who have brought the

leadership in organic chemistry from Germany, where they hold incontestable lead in the aromatic field, to the United States, where the abundance of raw materials and independence of thought has permitted American chemists to strike out in entirely new directions."

Dr. Curme's original work, done in 1915-16, involved the production of acetylene, the thermo-decomposition of mineral oil induced by striking an electric arc beneath the surface of the oil.

Subsequently he has worked out practical methods for the production of ethylene glycol, ethylene dichloride, ethylene chlorhydrin, ethylene oxide, diethyl sulfate, dichlor ethyl ether and many other compounds. Most of this work has been patented and the company with which he is connected was organized to exploit it.

Dr. Curme's greatest achievement has not been solely the working out of laboratory methods for making these compounds, but in translating these laboratory applications to large scale manufacturing processes. Today the production of ethylene glycol, ethylene dichloride, ethylene chlorhydrin and some of the other compounds mentioned runs into many millions of pounds annually.

More recently his early work in connection with the production of synthetic isopropyl alcohol and acetone has been commercialized and these products are now available on a large scale.

Science News Letter, January 21, 1933

ENGINEERING-ECONOMICS

What to Read to Learn. More About "Technocracy"

NOW THAT MOST members of the reading public are using the word "technocracy" in daily conversation, some of them may wish to dig into the book literature and make up their own minds about the menace or benefit of the machine age in relation to economics.

First there might be mentioned the new flock of books, some grinding through the presses, some on the bookshop shelves, that deal with "Technocracy" as advanced by the New York group of engineers and architects. Among these are: "The A.B.C. of Technocracy" by Frank Arkright (Harpers), "Towards Technocracy" by Graham A. Laing (Angelus Press), "Life in a Technocracy" by Harold Loeb (Viking Press), "Technocracy, An Interpretation"

by Stuart Chase (John Day), "The Truth About Technocracy" by Walter B. Pitkin (Simon and Schuster), "What is Technocracy?" by Allen Raymond (Whittlesey House), "An Outline of Technocracy" by Wayne W. Parrish (Farrar and Rinehart).

For the background of Technocracy, and some say the source of its economic ideas, see: "The Engineers and the Price System" by Thorstein Veblen (Viking Press, 1921); "Wealth, Virtual Wealth and Debt" by Frederick Soddy (E. P. Dutton and Co. 1926).

For facts, figures and interpretations of the economic consequences of power and science in industry, read: "Recent Social Trends" by President Hoover's Committee (McGraw-Hill); "Recent Economic Changes," another Hoover

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▼ The Science Service radio address next week will be on the subject

R PLANTS THAT FORM REEFS AND ISLANDS

A by

D Dr. Marshall A. Howe

I Assistant Director of the New York Botanical Garden

O FRIDAY, JAN. 27

at 12:45 P. M., Eastern Standard Time

Over Stations of The Columbia Broadcasting System

survey, 1929 (National Bureau of Economic Research and McGraw-Hill) and its supplementary volume just issued, "Economic Tendencies" by Frederick C. Mills (National Bureau of Economic Research); "The Paradox of Plenty" by Harper Leech (Whittlesey House); "Economic Consequences of Power Production" by Fred Henderson (Allen and Unwin, London).

If the problems entice, there is more mental fodder on civilization's predicament in the books by Sir Arthur Salter, John Maynard Keynes, Stuart Chase and others who have written on our economic problems in the last few years.

Science News Letter, January 21, 1933

GENETICS

Hybrid Macaw Developed "Throwback" Feathers

A CASE of hybridization in which the offspring did not show a combination of parental characters, but instead a reversion to an apparent ancestral pattern, has been reported to *Nature*.

In New Zealand, two macaws were mated. The male was a red-and-yellow bird, the female blue-and-yellow. When their young one grew its adult plumage, the feathers on the underside of the body were neither red nor blue, but a combination. This is what might be expected in a hybrid. However, its back feathers were neither red nor blue nor mixed, but bluish-green. This color appears on neither of the parents, but is the common back-color of the wild ancestral stock.

Science News Letter, January 21, 1933

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