

lities may have to be provided for this purpose. It is also necessary to introduce, among the different manufacturers, the idea of specialisation at a certain stage. Each manufacturer makes all kinds of different instruments, with the result that the designers and the workmen have little chance of acquiring the necessary experience and skill to be able to produce articles of a definite quality. The purchaser, in spite of his anxiety to buy Indian-made articles, remains perplexed. It would, therefore, appear necessary to establish independent or State-controlled institutions which will be in a position to critically exam-

ine the different products of different makers and grade them properly. These institutions will also arrange to equip themselves with special expensive tools and precision standards which individual makers of scientific instruments can hardly be expected to afford and yet are required to employ.

The Universities and other public institutions which maintain large libraries will also have to widen the scope of their activities and endeavour to obtain literature bearing on the subject of the manufacture of scientific instruments, a subject which does not appear to have received much attention so far.

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## PROSPECTS OF HUMAN SURVIVAL

DR. KIRTLEY F. MATHER discussed the prospects of human survival in his Sigma Xi lecture delivered during the recent session of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science*, Ohio, 1940. On geological, palæontological and biological grounds, man will probably survive for at least some thousands of years. "Even if this present age is interglacial and not post-glacial, man's specific adaptability to extremes of climatic environment would enable him to survive. There is, however, one circumstance which militates against man's prolonged survival. This is the

fact that in his conquest of the material world, which is the fundamental characteristic of his recent progress in civilization, man is using up his capital, such as oil, at a far higher rate than he is using his income, that is, the products of natural increase; and a further and even more alarming feature is that that capital expenditure is increasing progressively as the enjoyment of its amenities extends to the less sophisticated peoples. Hence, exhaustion of capital in possibly seventy years or less may seriously curtail man's future."—*Nature*, 1940, No. 3678, p. 663.

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## CENTENARIES

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### Ridson, Tristram (1580–1640)

TRISTRAM RIDSON, a British topographer, was born in a village near Terrington about 1580. He resided at Pembroke College for some years but left Oxford without a degree.

Ridson lived on intimate terms with his contemporary topographers and his *Chorographical description or survey of Devon* commenced in 1605 and completed in 1630 was a much used manuscript, till it was printed in 1714. Its value was such that it went through several editions till about a century ago. An index to this book was commenced in the *Transactions* of the Devonshire Association in 1894.

Ridson died in June 1640.

### Duclaux, Pierre Emile (1840–1904)

PIERRE EMILE DUCLAUX, a French biochemist, was born at Aurillae June 24, 1840. Besides several papers he wrote more than half a dozen treatises of which his *Microbiologu* in four volumes is the most famous.

Duclaux was a friend and co-worker of Pasteur. He accompanied Pasteur to Milan when the latter visited the seeding establishment which had been named after himself. It was he that planned the *Annals* of the Pasteur Institute. Duclaux died in 1904.

### Veitch, Henry James (1840–1924)

HENRY JAMES VEITCH, an English horticulturist was born at Exeter June 29, 1840. His father was himself horticulturist of his day. He was very keen in introducing new plants to cultivation. His firm were pioneers in orchid hybridisation. He was connected with the Royal Horticultural Society of which he ultimately became vice-president. He was awarded the Victoria Medal of honour in 1906 and was honoured by several other foreign learned societies. His two chief works are the *Manual of coniferæ* (1900) and the *Manual of orchidaceous plants* (1887–1894).

Veitch died at East Burnham Park July 6, 1924.

S. R. RANGANATHAN,