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Romance Is Where You Find It

THIS issue of I&EC contains 58 pages on rocket propellants. Considering this fact and remembering C. M. Cooper's "Professional Man" contribution on page 49 A, titled "Tools for the Engineer," we were led to some reflections on the thoughts our young engineers and chemists may have as they complete their formal education and begin looking for the "right" position. It is interesting to speculate on what fields probably come first to their minds. We'll bet a buck that on top of the list are some of the more romantic-sounding (and more highly advertised) fields—rockets, guided missiles, nuclear technology. With today's hot competition for young graduates, we wonder whether both the apparent romance of some of these particular areas and the romance of high salaries may not be leading some young scientists into haphazard rather than directed career beginnings and into overlooking some of the fields where the romance is less evident but still present.

In our college days, we thought the perfumery industry sounded romantic, but we never got into it (it still sounds romantic, and last month's I&EC carried a photograph of industrial production of anisic aldehyde from coal tar components). We didn't see (and we suspect most young graduates today don't either) much romance in the fertilizer, paint, or heavy chemicals fields, but fortune put us right in contact with some of these less-romantic appearing industries when we began looking for a job—and they didn't turn out to be dull.

The answer, in the words of the popular song writer of the twenties which were resurrected a couple of years ago, is that "the bird with feathers of blue is waiting for you, back in your own backyard." There can be romance in *any* job in chemistry or chemical engineering if you just look hard enough for it. The engineer who modifies a process in fertilizer production and sees a significant cost reduction for his company gets a glow of satisfaction from his accomplishment, as does the chemist who develops a new resin with certain desirable properties, or the equipment designer who finds more efficient equipment to use in a specific process. And they probably wouldn't consider trading places with their contemporaries in any of the obviously more romantic positions!

Everyone cannot hope to get his name on the front page for his personal accomplishments today. With the team efforts now in prominence, the individual is even less likely to find that he as a single worker, can produce a startling new development. But even the idea of teamwork is sort of romantic in itself. We cannot help but recommend attention to *finding* romance in what you are doing, or in what you want to do. There is a great need for good, romantically-minded young men in the more prosaic appearing areas of the chemical industry.

The Chemical Industry Moves Toward the Consumer

FIFTY years from now will we have such a thing as the chemical industry in this country? Heresy? Only in the way the question sounds superficially. Reflecting on the trend of chemical manufacturing toward the consumer, John L. Gillis of Monsanto posed the possibility at the recent CCDA meeting in New York that the typical industrial corporation of the future will engage in virtually every aspect of industrial activity and specialize in no single field. A few of his phrases offer interesting support for this statement:

Chemical companies...keep up with the times by continually upgrading their products to higher and higher levels in order to maintain profit margins and growth. As products are upgraded further the point is inevitably reached where they need no further processing for final consumption.

The trend is toward making themselves basic in the manufacture of their own chemical raw materials. The choice remains to the traditional supplier to go out of that business or to move toward the consumer and the end product.

More and more companies are becoming aware of the attraction of stabilizing sale and profits through greater control of end product outlets.

The chemical manufacturer moves ahead of the ability of his historical outlets to keep up with his progress.

Editors are always pleased when their selection of articles as presaging or following a trend is favorably confirmed. In April 1955 a part of the problem under consideration in "The Case History Method as a Tool" was that of making or buying raw materials, and in an early issue I&EC will publish another CCDA article about this problem. Our June special feature will be titled "What About Going into Business for Yourself," and here the first choice of the majority of persons queried shows that the small business is definitely a business aimed toward consumer or packaged type products.

One of a series of three articles on pitfalls in commercial chemical development was a feature of I&EC's March issue. E. L. Kropa, explaining the game theory of development as it can or *must* be applied to commercial development, made a strong case for the fact that the ground rules for one product cannot be translated over as the ground rules for another. Mr. Gillis emphatically echoed this thesis: "Another hurdle which a number of us have faced and others have awaiting them is the completely new set of merchandising problems involved in the marketing of consumer items. There is a new set of skills required...quite different from anything involved in the selling of industrial chemicals...this new kind of thinking carries right into top management."

Whether the chemical industry is quietly swallowed up into the all inclusive industrial operation, or whether as *Fortune's* editors predicted, the chemical industry might take over all other industry, we are due for many changes, and rapidly. Traditionally, we are used to taking changes in our stride.