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*The American Association for the Advancement of Science:*  
*Standards of Living as Functions of Science and of Social Organization:* DR. STUART A. RICE ..... 167

*Obituary:*  
*Heinrich William Poll:* PROFESSOR HAROLD CUMMINS. *Recent Deaths* ..... 172

*Scientific Events:*  
*The New British Non-Ferrous Metal Research Laboratories; Expedition to the Pacific Islands; Courses in Public Health at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Establishment by the American Mathematical Society of a New Periodical; Award of the Chandler Medal* ..... 173

*Scientific Notes and News* ..... 176

*Discussion:*  
*The New Nomenclator Zoologicus:* PROFESSOR T. D. A. COCKERELL. *A New Color Reaction of Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>:* DR. GILBERTO G. VILLELLA and ALUISIO M. LEAL. *On the Nature of Friction:* PROFESSOR G. W. HAMMAR and GORDON MARTIN. *The Conscience of the Past and the Practise of the Present:* PROFESSOR M. F. ASHLEY-MONTAGU ..... 178

*Scientific Books:*  
*Science in Africa:* HAROLD J. COOLIDGE, JR. *The Advance of Medicine:* PROFESSOR CHAUNCEY D. LEAKE ..... 180

*Societies and Meetings:*  
*The Seismological Society of America—Eastern Section:* A. J. WESTLAND, S.J. .... 183

*Special Articles:*  
*Studies in the Physical Chemistry of Insulin:* PROFESSOR EDWIN J. COHN and OTHERS. *Type-Specific Antibody Production with Living Pneumococci in the Rabbit:* PROFESSOR JULES FREUND and MARTHA A. BEHAN. *The Significance of the Amino Acids in Canine Nutrition:* PROFESSOR WILLIAM C. ROSE and ELDON E. RICE ..... 183

*Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:*  
*Deep-Sea Photography:* PROFESSOR E. NEWTON HARVEY. *A Glass Electrode Vessel for the Determination of Blood pH:* DR. VIVIAN G. BEHRMANN and PROFESSOR MARION FAY ..... 187

*Science News* ..... 6

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## STANDARDS OF LIVING AS FUNCTIONS OF SCIENCE AND OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION<sup>1</sup>

By Dr. STUART A. RICE

CHAIRMAN, U. S. CENTRAL STATISTICAL BOARD

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THE purposes of my paper as first projected for inclusion in the symposium on "Science and Society" were: "(1) to take stock of the extent to which the standards of living of the people in the world have been raised in recent times; (2) to examine the extent to which production must still be expanded in order to provide satisfactory standards of living." It was hoped thus to "provide a factual basis on which to consider the needs for further applications of science to productive enterprise."

The phrasing of these intended specifications implies an attempt at statistical precision. "Take stock," "extent," "raised," "factual basis," "further applica-

<sup>1</sup> Condensed from the address on "World Standards of Living" of the retiring vice-president and chairman of Section K, of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at the Ottawa session, June 28, 1938.

tions," are expressions appropriately used in discussing measurable and measured or enumerated phenomena. Alas! Quantitative evidences of changes in the world's standards of living are not to be here presented. The concept "standard of living" is a will-o'-the-wisp. Its incarnate shapes and dimensions at different times in different climes have not been calibrated.

Alfred Marshall avoids the term "standard of living"<sup>2</sup> and distinguishes between the *standard of life*, meaning "the standard of activities adjusted to wants," and the *standard of comfort*, "a term that may suggest a mere increase of artificial wants, among which perhaps the grosser wants may predominate." "A rise in the standard of life implies an increase in intelli-

<sup>2</sup> "Principles of Economics," 8th ed., Chapter XIII, on "Progress in Relation to Standards of Life."

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