

"In times past, there can be but little doubt, that this region was actually a part of the Bay of Bengal and that with the gradual extension of the Delta seawards the water of the rivers and lakes gradually became less and less salt, though the actual process must have been extremely slow. A certain number of marine species that had established themselves within the area during the early stages of the formation of the Delta would doubtless be able to acclimatise themselves to the gradually changing conditions and thus equally be able to persist in

their original habitat and form a relict fauna."

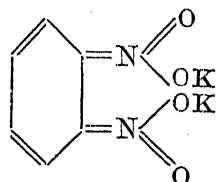
The paper as a whole is a most striking and important contribution, and the author's treatment of the general biological problems connected with this fauna is very clear and stimulating. In a country like India, where there are several estuarine regions, the paper should prove a boon to the general biologist, especially as it contains a big list of useful references. Col. Sewell deserves to be heartily congratulated on this magnificent piece of work.

### Letters to the Editor.

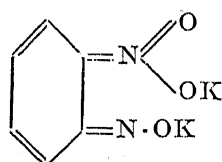
#### Truhaut's Colour Reaction for Uric Acid.

QUITE recently Truhaut (*J. Pharm. Chim.*, 1933, **125**, 339) observed that many compounds having a -CO- grouping in the molecule gave a colour reaction with *m*-dinitrobenzene in alkaline solution. Uric acid is stated to give a stable and characteristic violet colour, when to a warmed mixture of 1 c.c. of 1% *m*-dinitrobenzene (in alcohol) and 2 c.c. of 10% aqueous sodium hydroxide solution, 0.1 g. of uric acid is added. As a matter of fact, a specimen of "pure" *m*-dinitrobenzene (supplied by Dr. Fraenkel and Dr. Landau of Berlin) gave a positive reaction under the above conditions. No colour reaction was, however, observed after this sample had been repeatedly crystallised from absolute alcohol. *o*-Dinitrobenzene, on the other hand, produced a violet colour even in *very minute* quantities. It is therefore believed that the sample of *m*-dinitrobenzene used by Truhaut was not free from *o*-dinitrobenzene and hence the colour.

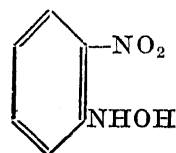
The violet colour may be due to the formation of a quinonoid salt (I) (Meisenheimer, *Ber.*, 1903, **36**, 4174), or (II). Prof.



(I)



(II)



(III)

W. Lipschitz (private communication) on the other hand prefers the structure (III).

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#### A Note on the Course of Crystallisation of a Basaltic Magma.

IN the study of the order of crystallisation of the different minerals in a cooling magma, according to Dr. Holmes<sup>1</sup> "the real order of formation is most likely to be ascertained from comparative observations on a series of rocks of similar chemical composition which have been quenched at different stages in their cooling history." A very good opportunity for such a study is afforded by an olivine dolerite dyke, occurring near Mysore. This dyke is about 65 feet in width and a good section is exposed in a channel cutting across the dyke. The dyke shows gradual textural changes from a porphyritic basalt at the selvages in contact with the gneissic country rock—to a coarse gabbro with sub-ophitic texture in the centre. The different stages of cooling history are thus clearly revealed, and from a microscopic examination of a series of graded sections from the margin to the centre, it is possible to study the order in which the minerals appeared and the order in which their crystallisation ceased.

<sup>1</sup> A. Holmes, *Petrographic Methods and Calculations*, 1930, pp. 350-351.