around 300°. The dimethyl ester, prepared in the usual manner, melted at 66–67°.

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RECEIVED JANUARY 20, 1950

The Silver Salt Degradation of *t*-Butylacetic Acid

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The conversion of the silver salt of a carboxylic acid by bromine to an alkyl or aryl bromide with one less carbon atom has been regarded[1] as a reaction proceeding by way of a free radical mechanism. The isolation of an inactive bromide from the decarboxylation of the silver salt of optically active α-ethylcaproic acid[2] has been cited as evidence for this mechanism. Other work[3,4,5] has indicated that the isolation of an inactive bromide from an optically active silver salt may not be significant. Arcus, Campbell and Kenyon[4] found that optically active α-phenylethyl bromide is racemized in carbon tetrachloride by bromine in the presence of silver bromide. These same workers also found that decarboxylation of silver $(+)$-α-phenylpropionate yields $(+)$-α-phenylethyl bromide with inversion of configuration.

It was of interest to carry out the degradation of the silver salt of *t*-butylacetic acid, since, if the intermediate formed is a carbonium ion it would rearrange and give *t*-amyl bromide rather than neopentyl bromide. When such a reaction was carried out, neopentyl bromide was isolated in 62% yield (based on *t*-butylacetic acid consumed.) The product was identified by physical constants and by conversion to *t*-butylacetanilide by treatment of the neopentylmagnesium bromide with phenyl isocyanate. The absence of *t*-amyl bromide in the neopentyl bromide was shown by a negative test with alcoholic silver nitrate.

The formation of neopentyl bromide by the degradation of silver *t*-butylacetate is in keeping with a free radical mechanism and indicates that the silver salt degradation does not proceed *via* a carbonium ion mechanism.

Experimental

Preparation and Degradation of Silver *t*-Butylacetate.—The silver salt of *t*-butylacetic acid was prepared by dissolving 41.5 g. (0.36 mole) of *t*-butylacetic acid in excess dilute ammonium hydroxide. The excess ammonia was boiled off and an aqueous solution of 61.2 g. (0.36 mole) of silver nitrate was added. The solution was cooled and the silver salt was collected by filtration and washed with water, methanol, and petroleum ether (28–38°). It was then dried in an oven at 110° for twelve hours and then in a desiccator over Drierite for an additional twelve hours; yield of dry silver *t*-butylacetate, 77.8 g. (97%).

In a 200-ml. round-bottom flask, surrounded by an ice bath, was placed 44.6 g. (0.20 mole) of silver *t*-butylacetate. A solution of 32.0 g. (0.20 mole) of bromine in 25 ml. of nitrobenzene was added slowly with shaking over a period of about twenty minutes. A slow evolution of gas was noted. After all the bromine solution had been added, the reaction mixture was removed from the ice-bath and allowed to warm to room temperature. As the temperature rose, the evolution of gas became more vigorous. When the evolution of gas had ceased, the reaction mixture was placed on a steam-bath and heated for two hours. The mixture was cooled, 25 ml. of ether was added, and the silver bromide was removed by filtration. The ethereal filtrate was washed in turn with 25 ml. of 5% sodium sulfite solution and 25 ml. of 5% sodium carbonate solution.

From the acidified washings there was obtained 7.6 g. of *t*-butylacetic acid boiling at 180–190°.

The ethereal solution was dried over calcium chloride and the ether was evaporated on a steam-bath. The resulting liquid was distilled at reduced pressure; the portion boiling below 80° (20 mm.) weighed 15.1 g. This portion was then fractionated at atmospheric pressure to give 12.6 g. (62% yield based on *t*-butylacetic acid consumed) of neopentyl bromide, b. p. 104–109°, n^{20}_{D} 1.4369, d^{20}_{4} 1.258. It gave no precipitate with alcoholic silver nitrate or sodium iodide in acetone.[6]

Conversion of the bromide to the Grignard reagent and treatment with phenyl isocyanate gave *t*-butylacetanilide, m. p. 130–131°, a mixed melting point with *t*-butylacetanilide prepared from *t*-butylacetyl chloride and aniline was 130–131°.

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[1] Price, "Mechanism of Reactions at Carbon–Carbon Double Bonds," Interscience Publishers, New York, N. Y., 1946, p. 55.

[2] Arnold and Morgan, THIS JOURNAL, **70**, 4248 (1948).

[3] Doering and Farber, *ibid.*, **71**, 1514 (1949).

[4] Arcus, Campbell and Kenyon, *J. Chem. Soc.*, 1510 (1949).

[5] Bell and Smyth, *ibid.*, 2372 (1949).

[6] Shriner and Fuson, "The Systematic Identification of Organic Compounds," John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, N. Y., 1948.

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RECEIVED JANUARY 16, 1950

The Phase Behavior of the System Sodium Stearate–Cetane

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There are few studies of phase diagrams of the anhydrous system: fatty acid soap–organic solvent, in the literature. Recent work includes a paper by Doscher and Vold[1] on the system sodium stearate–cetane, carried out by means of the polarizing microscope, and the work by G. H. Smith[2] on sodium stearate–aromatic, naphthenic and paraffinic compounds of low molecular weight, done by visual observations of evacuated glass cells under polarized light. While Smith's diagrams for various hydrocarbon types resemble each other remarkably, especially with regard to the large exaltation of the t_i-point[3] at 25–30% solvent concentration, the sodium stearate–cetane system studied by Doscher and Vold is of a very different character. Thus Smith's systems with low molecular weight solvents (C_6 to C_8) of widely differing chemical nature resemble each other to such an extent that Smith constructed a generalized phase diagram sodium stearate–hydrocarbon from which one may conclude that the nature of the hydrocarbon has little influence upon the qualitative or even the quantitative

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[1] Doscher and Vold, *J. Coll. Sci.*, **1**, 299 (1946).

[2] G. H. Smith, *J. Am. Oil Chem. Soc.*, XXIV, 353 (1947); also thesis, Stanford, 1947.

[3] The t_i-point is the temperature at which the optically anisotropic jelly and isotropic liquid are in equilibrium.