

YOUNGEST HUMAN DISCOVERED IN MINUTE EMBRYO

The Pithecanthropus erectus of human embryos has been discovered and made known to science. It is a scarcely visible mass of cells but it is the youngest human being on record.

Since the evolution of the human race is recapitulated in the development of the baby before birth, this rare specimen, known as the Miller ovum, is representative of the very dawn of humanity. Embryologists are as excited over the discovery as the anthropologists are when the skeletons of ancient man come to light.

Dr. George L. Streeter, head of the Department of Embryology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, here, will soon publish an exhaustive study and detailed description of the Miller ovum.

The development of the embryo from the time of fertilization to birth has been carefully studied in many of the lower animals but the opportunities to study the human embryo in its early stages have been rare. According to Dr. Streeter there is no other normal ^{human} embryo known to science quite so young as the 'Miller' ovum, which is estimated to be only eleven days old. This specimen, then, affords the very first view of man in the making.

It was discovered in 1909 by Dr. J. W. Miller, at that time an assistant in the Woman's Clinic at the University of Heidelberg. The womb of a patient suffering from dysmenorrhea was scraped. As customary, the material obtained was placed at once in a chemical solution which "fixed" or preserved it for later examination. In reporting the case, Dr. Miller noted the discovery of the embryo which he carefully preserved on glass.

Not being a specialist in embryology himself, Dr. Miller recently sent this embryo to Dr. Streeter for study and publication in such form as to make this rare object available to embryologists everywhere.

The Miller ovum is just large enough to be visible to the naked eye, a mere speck, but when seen under the microscope it is apparent that this individual has been quite busy during the eleven days of its life. Instead of a single cell there is an elaborate group of cells. A central cell mass is clearly discernible attached to one side of the inner surface of a large ring or "balloon" which it has thrown out, and from which streamers or arms penetrate the mother substance for the purpose of preparing the necessary surroundings for the normal development of the central cell mass or embryo proper.

Dr. Streeter and his staff illustrate the report with beautiful microphotographic color plates which reproduce with accuracy not only the structural details but also the delicate shades of coloring as seen under the microscope.

The disease of rabies is said to be increasing in this country.
