



Science News-Letter



A Weekly Summary of Current Science

EDITED BY WATSON DAVIS

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Bowing—

The SCIENCE NEWS-LETTER is pleased to appear before you in its new printed dress. It hopes that you will not mistake it for a conventional, old-line magazine. It wishes to continue as it started out in life—a personal service to its readers.

Born over four years ago, on March 13, 1922; of the demand and interest of those individuals who had caught a glimpse of *Science Service's* news reports to newspapers, the SCIENCE NEWS-LETTER has since proved interesting to laymen, scientists, students, teachers and children.

Into the pages of the NEWS-LETTER have been fed—and will continue to be fed—the cream of *Science Service's* output directed at the newspapers of the world. To this is added material especially prepared.

Now that the NEWS-LETTER is printed, it is possible to introduce novel features that we believe make its contents more valuable or easily used. Turn the pages and note:

It is a *separable* magazine. You can clip or tear out any article without losing or damaging another article on the other side.

Each article is automatically *indexed* by the key word printed above its heading. (See page 2 for explanation.)

Each article is automatically *dated* by its last line.

Books are *reviewed in brief* as they are received from the publishers.

The *classics of science* and striking passages from current books, addresses and periodicals are carefully selected and published.

Important *anniversaries* of science are appropriately noted week by week in a special department.

Regular articles tell of the happenings in the *skies* and in the great *outdoors*.

Photographs aid in the telling of the week's science.

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ASTRONOMY



GEORGE ELLERY HALE

He Knows The Sun

"The most intimate acquaintance of the sun" is the title that might well be claimed by Dr. George Ellery Hale, who is shown here examining the image of the sun formed by the coelostat telescope in the rotunda of the new building of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, a project largely the fruit of his labors.

He invented the spectroheliograph. By means of this device photographs of the sun may be made with a single wave length of light. In 1895, he organized the Yerkes Observatory of the University of Chicago, where he served as director until 1905, when he was called to organize the Mt. Wilson Observatory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. There he remained as director until 1923 when he retired from active duty and became honorary director, in charge of policy and development, though he has continued his researches. Recently he developed the spectrohelioscope, a modification of his earlier invention, by which it is now possible to view the sun directly in light of a single wave length.

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CHEMISTRY

Ice Cream From Crude Oil

By EDWIN E. SLOSSON

The chemists of America recently celebrated the semi-centennial of their organization with a meeting at Philadelphia. Dr. Edwin E. Slosson, author of "Creative Chemistry," etc., in this article tells of some of the achievements and hopes of modern chemistry as revealed in the sessions.

Ice cream made from crude oil is one of the many marvels forecast by Prof. James F. Norris, president of the American Chemical Society. Edible fats, the same as those in vegetable and animal foods, and other fats equally nutritious but not found in nature, can be obtained by breaking up the molecules of mineral oil and rearranging the atoms to form new compounds.

This cracking process has been applied to petroleum for many years to obtain a larger yield of the gasoline distillate, but the investigations recently carried out by the Petroleum Institute have shown that it is possible to attach oxygen to the cracked molecules and so produce alcohols and acids of all sorts. Aromatics, flower perfumes, fruit flavors, drugs and dyes in infinite variety may be made by such methods. This suggests that petroleum which has hitherto been used for fuel and lubricating may be found in the future to be even more valuable as a source of substances for which man has hitherto been dependent upon the chance bounty of nature. Glycerin, which is now obtained from the decomposition of soap fats, can be produced from petroleum, and transformed into nitroglycerin for dynamite. Synthetic plastics like rubber and bakelite may also be manufactured from the same raw material. It is unfortunate that we should come to realize the possibilities of petroleum only now, when the Government Oil Commission announces that the known oil reserves of the United States will last only six years at the present rate of consumption.

But Dr. Norris has his answer to

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