

## MINERALOGY

**Hold Jade Precious**

Sophisticated jade earrings that are a necessary decoration of sleek evening coiffeurs are a modern symptom of the jade madness that has possessed China for centuries. The feminine taste for the green quartz of Asia has become so keen that a celebrated London firm recently started working its own jade quarry in Burma.

Though its home is in northern Burma and Turkestan jade is called Chinese because the grinding and carving is all done in China. The Chinese are the only masters of this industry because jade has always been esteemed by them as the "quintessence of heaven and earth," the most precious of precious stones.

The earliest use of jade was almost purely ritualistic and symbolical according to R. L. Hobson, curator of the department of ceramics and ethnography at the British Museum. It was a royal stone and kings were wont to exchange cities or towns for a single piece. It was one of

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## MEDICINE

**Baldness Baffles Science**

Hopeful bald men who pin touching faith to the hair restorer bottle on the bathroom shelf can never hope for the hirsute glory that was Samson's. For the alopecious thousands that pant for more hair the American Medical Association and the U. S. Public Health Service recommend a good tonic, massage, and a dandruff antiseptic mixture of alcohol and castor oil. These measures that have the stamp of medical approval may conserve what hair a man has already, but they are cold comfort to the really bald. For sure-enough baldness there is no cure except upon rare occasions.

Nor has science been more successful in unearthing the cause of baldness. One German authority believes that it may be a secondary male sex character. Consequently a man has more call to blame his parents than his wife when he begins to see his scalp appear through his departing locks. Nervous conditions have something to do with it, it is generally agreed, and occasionally syphilis is the guilty agent. Other physicians have conjectured that baldness is due to some disturbance of the endocrine glands. This observation is based on the fact that salts of the rare metal thallium which produces endocrine disturbances will also produce baldness. No form of endocrine treatment, however, that has

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## SOCIOLOGY

**High Chinese Death Rate**

China, with its swarming millions of people, its crowded streets and villages, has a very low rate of population increase in recent years, largely because of the great proportion of deaths. This fact is shown by a new study of Chinese censuses since 1741, made by a Chinese government statistician, Chang-heng Chen.

In 1741, the Chinese people numbered only about 25 millions more than the United States population of today, and in the 50 years following 1741 the population more than doubled, advancing at the rate of 15 per 1,000 people every year. In the next half century, the population increase slowed down to less than five additions a year to each 1,000 people. From 1849 down to 1923, the rate of addition has gone down to only .81 per thousand. This, Mr. Chang says, is lower than the rate of population advance in any other country except France.

"The rate of increase of nations of the white race since 1800 has been 11 per 1,000," he says. "This means

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## BIOLOGY

**Sex Extract of Flowers**

The much-quoted aphorism of Kipling, that "the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under their swin," is capable of a much wider extension, to include all living female beings, both animal and plant, if results reported by Prof. Bernhard Zondek, of the University of Berlin, may be taken as a criterion. For he has shown that female animals, rendered sexually inactive by surgical operations, have their missing instincts restored to them by extracts taken from the female organs of plants. His most powerful vegetable "love potion" was extracted from the pistillate catkins of willows, which are purely female flowers, but he also obtained results when he used an extract taken from water lilies. This latter experiment calls to mind the poetic legend of the birth of Buddha, whose mother, according to an old Indian tradition, conceived at the touch of a lotus flower. Prof. Zondek has obtained his results only with extracts made from the sexual parts of plants extracts from the vegetative portions are without effect.

Two other physiologists, Prof. Dohrn and Dr. Faure, of Vienna, state that they have performed similar experiments with an extract of yeast,

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## BIOLOGY

**NATURE RAMBLINGS**

By FRANK THONE

**Early Dandelions**

Poets, rhapsodizing over the coming of spring, sing of violets and crocuses and snowdrops and daffy-downillies but strangely neglect the dandelion. Yet this tousled tow-head is among the earliest of flowers, impudently showing its undesired face in all sorts of places exposed to the rawest winds, if only the sun shines strongly there. In fact, March dandelions might well serve as a kind of large-scale soil thermometer, to point out the patches that warm up first. You find a line of them nestling along the lee of a house, or even in the slight shelter of a raised sidewalk. And where a group of buildings is heated from a central boiler plant with radiating pipe lines under ground, their course is marked plainly on the surface by zones of yellow bloom.

These early dandelions resemble their later successors of the close-clipped lawns of summer, in that their stems are short. Long stems belong to the long-grass period, and to dandelions trapped in partial shade, which is uncongenial to their kind. Shortness of stem seems to be linked up with free access of light, and possibly also with higher evaporating power of the air; though these are only guesses—nobody really knows why as yet.

It may seem queer that these flowers go right on and form normal heads of seed, when there are no insects about to carry the fertilizing pollen. The secret is, that though dandelions form pollen they never use it, but produce their seeds without the formality of fertilization, after the weird fashion of plant-lice and water-fleas, that regularly bring forth fatherless offspring.

Science News-Letter, March 12, 1927

Production of rayon, or artificial silk, now surpasses that of real silk.

A sensitive instrument which measures the poisonous carbon monoxide gas released by automobiles has been devised by government chemists, and may be used in vehicular tunnels.

## Do You Know That—

The temperature of a warm blooded animal when hibernating is almost the same as its cold surroundings.

The average length of life of negroes in this country is 46 years, while that of white people is 54 years.

An Ohio chemist finds that we eat only one-third as many foods high in vitamins as we ought at the average meal.

A series of 20 lessons were recently broadcast by one teacher to over 250,000 children in New England school-rooms.

Helium mixed with oxygen forms an atmosphere as breathable as ordinary air, and is being used in diving and tunneling activities.

Chemical engineers in Africa find that the euphorbia tree, so abundant in that country, produces rubber which might be commercialized.

Parchment paper is paper from which all the air has been driven out and the pores filled with a preparation, usually colloidal cellulose.

Government scientists have produced disks with a surface so flat that it differs from a true plane by less than two ten-millionths of an inch.

Static electricity which can be generated in the human body has been sufficient to start fires in the presence of alcohol or gasoline vapors.

The University of California is experimenting with quick methods of removing the pucker from slowly ripening Japanese persimmons.

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## Chinese Death Rate

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that the rate of increase of the Chinese population in modern times has been not quite one-third as fast as that of other countries."

The Chinese population reached the 400,000,000 mark back in 1835, according to the census figures. Since that time it has advanced only to 438,370,000, and the statistician believes that this extraordinarily slow rate of advance is due to high death rates rather than to low birth rates. China does not need any large increase of population at present, he adds, but high death rates are not healthy factors.

Census figures before 1741 in China were misleading, Mr. Chang shows, because the head count included only males between 16 and 60 years and it was taken with the primary purpose of levying taxes. These taxes were lower in sparsely settled communities. Hence, Chinese population figures were often strangely low.

After 1741, both males and females of all ages were counted, Mr. Chang states.

Science News-Letter, March 12, 1927

## Flower Sex Extract

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which is a microscopic plant that normally reproduces without any sexual process whatever.

These rejuvenation experiments on females by means of various extracts are regarded here as of great importance, inasmuch as the female glandular mechanism is far less susceptible to surgical treatment such as the Steinach operation, than are the sex glands of males, hitherto the only beneficiaries of scientific efforts to restore youth. Glandular extracts provocative of sex reactions in the male, analogous to those already well known for female reactions, have so far been unobtainable; so that surgical treatment for males and glandular extract treatment for females are regarded as having reciprocal value.

Science News-Letter, March 12, 1927

The only practical method of reducing static in radio is said to be the use of some kind of antenna system which receives more strongly from one direction than from another.

Records of the northern Great Plains Weather Bureau station in North Dakota show that frost has occurred as late as June 3 and as early as August 23.

## Chinese Jade

(Continued from page 167)

the oldest commodities of trade and for this reason the best has never been exported but is reserved for the trade in China itself.

Many of the finest pieces have been taken from tombs while the badges of princes of royal blood were always jade. Gold was the material used for those of officers of only the third and fourth rank. The artists of China have long lavished full play of their decorative fancy on the translucent stone which was also administered in powdered form by Chinese physicians to their patients.

It is first mentioned in English History when Sir Walter Raleigh brought what was called a kidney stone from the West Indies, from its supposed properties for curing disorders of the kidneys. It is conjectured that this piece of jade reached the Western World by way of Spaniards who probably had it from the East.

Science News-Letter, March 12, 1927

## Baldness

(Continued from page 167)

been used so far has been of any use in growing a cover for a shiny dome.

Irradiation with roentgen rays does no good and exposure to ultra-violet light is of very little use. In short, science does not know why the bald are bald, and there is little the bald man can do about it but cultivate a cheerful disposition.

Science News-Letter, March 12, 1927

Argentina's worst insect crop pest is a locust like the large flying grasshoppers of the United States.

A Japanese railroad engineer has perfected a method of detecting dangerous flaws in rails by magnetism.

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