

## 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.

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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.