

Literalism and Illiteracy

By ROLAND M. HARPER

Dr. Harper is a well-known Southern botanist and sociologist.

It has been observed that the authors and supporters of anti-evolution bills which have been introduced in several state legislatures in the last few years, and passed in two or three, generally hail from some of the more "backward" counties; and on the assumption that such legislators reflect the views of their constituents, the writer has made a statistical study of the population of such counties in fourteen States, ranging from Delaware to Florida, North Dakota and California. In some states two or three counties are involved, on account of anti-evolution bills having been sponsored by two or more members, or in different years. The statistics are based on the white population only, for other races are not known to have taken any part in the controversy.

It is found that the anti-evolution counties taken together rank below the combined averages of the same states, and still more below the United States average. For instance, the 1920 illiteracy figures for adult whites in Tennessee are 9 per cent. for the State as a whole, but 26.6 per cent. for Macon county, the home of the author of the law that started the famous Dayton trial. The rating holds not only in illiteracy, as might be expected, but also in a few other measures of culture afforded by census figures. For example, the "anti-evolution counties" have a larger proportion of males and a smaller proportion of adults than the average.

However, in a few states the anti-evolution stronghold ranks a little above the state average in one or more of these things, and apparently in no case does the spokesman of the "antis" come from the poorest or most illiterate county in his state. This last may indicate that the most ignorant people are indifferent to the evolution question, as the negroes and recent immigrants seem to be. But "a little learning is a dangerous thing," and the rapid extension of educational facilities to the remotest communities may make the situation more menacing in the near future than it is now.

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"Monkey War" Collapses

A survey of the legislative season just closed discloses what appears to be an utter collapse, for the time being, at least, of the great drive to banish the teaching of evolution from American schools, widely heralded after the Dayton "monkey trial" and the death of William Jennings Bryan. During the winter and spring of 1926-27 no less than twelve state legislatures had anti-evolution bills brought before them, and all twelve have adjourned without the passage of a single one of the measures.

In six of the states—California, Delaware, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Carolina and North Dakota—the bills did not even get to the floor of the House, but were disposed of in committee, usually by decisive or even unanimous votes. In Missouri, which was declared in advance by the Fundamentalists to be a pivotal state, the bill reached the House and was there rejected by the very solid margin of 82 to 62. In West Virginia and Oklahoma anti-evolution measures were defeated by House votes of 57-36 and 46-30, respectively.

The fight was begun very early in Arkansas and carried on aggressively by the proponents of the bill, and it was expected that this state would pass over into the Tennessee-Mississippi class, so far as freedom of teaching was concerned. But it turned out otherwise, for after passing the lower house by a very close margin (three votes, according to one report; one vote, according to another) it was rejected in the Senate by an overwhelming aye-and-nay vote. A part of the clergy in Arkansas are reported to be very angry over the outcome of the contest and to have declared war on all members of the legislature who are known to have voted against the bill.

In only two states has the proposed repressive legislation survived even in attenuated form. In Alabama a bill on the Tennessee model was introduced during January and remained sleeping in committee until, in March, the legislature adjourned until June 7. What will happen then no one will undertake to prophesy. In South Carolina the bill likewise slept until the closing hours of the session, when it was reported out by the committee, without recommendation, in order, its author

(Just turn the page)



HERBERT EUGENE IVES

Televisionary

To Dr. Ives, shown above in a picture that was sent by telephone from Chicago to New York, is chiefly due the new television process of the Bell laboratories, of whose staff he is a prominent member. For while the new process is a result of the cooperation of many minds in a great research laboratory, it was Dr. Ives who was in general charge of the work and who coordinated the various contributions, besides being personally responsible for the new photoelectric cell and the optical aspects of the whole problem.

This is not his first contribution to science, for he was also in charge of the development of the picture transmission process, by which anyone can take a picture to the telephone office in New York and have it delivered a few hours later in San Francisco. During the war he was in charge of the experimental work of the Army in airplane photography. Before that, in the decade following his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania and the receipt of his doctor's degree from Johns Hopkins, he served as a research physicist for various organizations. His principal work was in photometry, and he developed the artificial daylight lamp now common in silk stores for examining colors.

Dr. Ives furnishes one of the rare examples of the son of a distinguished father attaining fame in a similar field, for Frederic E. Ives, his father, who still lives and works in Philadelphia, is world-famous as an inventor of photographic processes. The half-tone process, by which the photographic illustrations in the NEWS-LETTER are reproduced, was his invention, and so was the first successful process of color photography. Now he is working on color movies.

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