PSYCHOLOGY

Does a Baby Trot?

Crawling babies do not pace, they trot. This disputed point has at last been shown by the camera, with the cooperation of a group of babies, at the psychological laboratory of Johns Hopkins University.

Results of the experiment, just reported by Dr. Lenoir H. Burnside, show that babies are much more individual in their ways of getting around in the world than older people are. Speaking generally, a human being's first attempts at locomotion are merely struggling forward with much floundering and waving of arms and legs. Later, the baby's arms begin to work, left, right, in alternating rhythm, while his legs are still dragged or hitched after him in most unrhythmic fashion. Then he begins to carry his abdomen clear off the floor, and at last he develops a left, right motion of his legs, alternating them with his arms.

Science News-Letter, December 24, 1927

ORNITHOLOGY

Robins Winter at Canyon

Winter snows have no terrors for robins at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Although the rim is 6866 feet above sea level, and snow often flies during the winter months, these birds stay throughout the year.

Several reasons have been suggested for this. One is that the birds which remain during the winter—for some of them do migrate when snow flies—are the older birds which have become accustomed to cold and privation, and prefer to take their chances at the Canyon all year rather than make the long flight to a milder climate and back again in the spring. This line of reasoning, however, seems doubtful.

It is more probable that the presence of robins at the Grand Canyon during the winter months is due to the fact that they have no difficulty in obtaining food there, even when the ground is snow-covered, for there is always available an abundance of crumbs and other scraps dear to the robin's palate. Generally the climate is not a severe one, even in winter. Should unusually rigorous weather occur, little robin red-breast is not confined to a choice between wasting his energy on a long hard flight to warmer climes or suffering from the unusual cold at the Canyon's rim. All he need do is volplane downward nearly a mile into the depths of the canyon, where summer reigns throughout the year. Here he can sojourn for a few days, until the storm is over, and then return to the rim for his delicate diet of crumbs.

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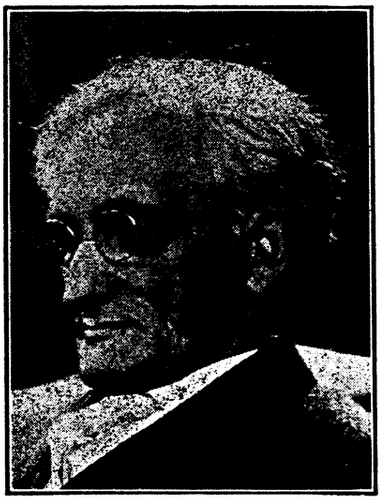
BOTANY-HORTICULTURE



LIBERTY HYDE BAILEY

One Wise in Counsel

We are told in the Homeric saga that when the besiegers of Troy faced perplexities they always turned for advice to a certain ruler from Ithaca. There was this good precedent for the selection by the American Association for the Advancement of Science of Liberty Hyde Bailey to sit at the head of its council table during the year now closing. The appropriateness of the choice brooks no question; in all departments of his calling—as botanist, educator, administrator, editor, man of public affairs, Dr. Bailey has labored hard and effectively to advance the interests of the plant sciences, so that election to high office came not as the conferring of a distinction but rather as a recognition of distinction already attained.

Liberty Hyde Bailey was born at South Haven, Michigan, in 1858. He received his fundamental training at Michigan State College, where he also did his first teaching. In 1888 he moved to Ithaca as professor of horticulture at Cornell University; in 1903 he became director of the college of agriculture there, and retained this position for ten years. Since his retirement from active teaching and direction of teaching he has devoted his attention increasingly to writing and publication on botanical, horticultural and humanistic subjects. The books and series he edits are recognized classics: the Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture, the Cyclopedia of American Agriculture, Rus, Rural Science Series—the list might be continued to great length.

Universities have paid homage to him with honorary degrees, and learned societies abroad with coveted foreign memberships. But these are things others may boast of. Rarer is the distinction tersely tucked away in a single line in his biographical note: "1882-83, assistant to Asa Gray."

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PHYSIOLOGY-PHYSICS

Cathode Rays Make Burns

Injuries caused by cathode rays, streams of electrons projected from Dr. W. D. Coolidge's recently invented tube, closely resemble burns due to overdoses of X-rays and are similarly stubborn about healing. This is indicated by experiments performed by Dr. Victor C. Jacobson and Dr. Kenneth C. Waddell of the Albany Medical College, to be announced soon in the scientific journal, *Archives of Pathology*.

Rats were used as subjects of the experiments. The animals were wrapped in jackets of copper foil to protect them from being rayed all over, and only a spot about an inch in diameter on the upper abdomen was left exposed.

The first sign of effect by the cathode rays was in the change of hair color, from white to yellow. Then the skin appeared to be tender, and finally developed pronounced sores, which were very slow to heal. When the rats were chloroformed and the skin subjected to microscopic examination, the details of the damage recembled closely those of X-ray burns. The experimenters state that it now appears highly likely that X-ray burns are really due to cathode rays generated by the impact of X-rays on solid or liquid objects which they encounter.

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CHEMISTRY

Milk Sickness Poison

The cause of milk sickness or "trembles," once a deadly scourge of pioneer communities in the Middle West and still a frequent cause of loss to livestock owners, has been traced down by a government scientist, Dr. James F. Couch of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

It is a compound belonging to the chemical group which contains the alcohols. It occurs in the weed known commonly as white snakeroot or richweed, and to botanists as *Eupatorium urticaefolium*. White snakeroot has long been regarded as the culprit in outbreaks of milk sickness, but just what its active principle was has remained unknown.

Dr. Couch has named his newly-

(*Just turn the page*)