SEISMOLOGY

Locate Mexican Earthquake

The earthquake that shook Mexico City on Friday morning, February 10, was centered at Puebla, southeast of the capital, according to an announcement of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey here after study of reports gathered from seismograph observatories by Science Service. The quake occurred at 9 hours 38 minutes and 36 seconds eastern standard time, and the epicenter, or point of greatest motion, was at latitude 18.5° north and longitude 97.5° west. This vicinity is one of the seismic regions of the globe, where heavy quakes are likely to occur.

This determination was made from reports to Science Service from seismograph stations at the Dominion Observatory, Ottawa, Canada; the Meteorological Observatory, Victoria, B. C.; the U. S. Weather Bureau, Chicago, Ill., and the stations of the Survey at Tucson, Ariz., and of the Jesuit Seismological Association at Loyola University, New Orleans, La.

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EUGENICS

35 Sons, No Daughters

A family in which the male tendency is so strong that for four generations not a daughter has been born has been discovered in San Pedro, Calif., through records reported to the Eugenics Records Office at Cold Spring Harbor.

No daughters have been born in the four generations although there have been thirty-five sons. The founder of the American branch of this family was born in Germany, the youngest of nineteen boys. He, in turn, had twelve sons. Out of these, one married an English Canadian woman. They had one son, who married and had three sons.

Chance as the sole explanation of this continued production of male children only is considered to be highly improbable. One hypothesis advanced is that the female embryos are early destroyed by some hereditary lethal factor carried by the family from generation to generation. Dr. C. B. Davenport, director of the Eugenics Records Office, is making a study of such one-sex families in an effort to determine their cause and he would welcome reports of other such families.

Male families would, of course, immediately die out if normal families did not exist for furnishing wives to the male strain.

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ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Can Lend Electric Power

Interconnection of the electric power systems of great areas of the country is proceeding rapidly with consequent economy and greater reliability of service, it was revealed at the meeting of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers.

Power can be sent over high voltage lines for thousands of miles, supplying the emergency needs of other cities and states. Hydroelectric plants when the rivers are running full can send their excess power to other localities and in the dry season can call upon the other companies to aid them fill local needs. Little power plants are giving way to larger units which can make more kilowatts for less dollars. Small hydroelectric plants, often automatically operated with only a caretaker or two constantly on the job, can be plugged into the great power system and economically do their share in turning the wheels of industry.

In spite of the progress reported at the symposium in which a dozen engineers spoke, W. E. Mitchell of Birmingham declared that electrical engineers still had much to accomplish before the problems of supplying electricity to all most reliably and economically are solved. The dispatching of power and the sending of it over various systems owned and operated by different companies has many mechanical and organizational difficulties.

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PEDAGOGY

Ground Glass "Blackboard"

Blackboards of translucent ground glass lighted from behind are proposed as a substitute for the opaque black surface familiar to every school child. Prof. W. Weniger of Oregon Agricultural College has demonstrated this new blackboard and is using it teaching his physics classes.

The old type of blackboard is difficult to illuminate so that all the room can see, Prof. Weniger found, while the ground glass lighted from the rear electrically allows everything chalked upon it to be seen from all parts of the room even when a combination of daylight and artificial illumination is being used. Erasing on the new "blackboard" is easy. It can also be used as a stereopticon screen and chalk talks can be interspersed with lantern slides without changing the lighting of the room.

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NATURE RAMBLINGS

By Frank Thone

Ladybird Beetle

"Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home—
Your house is afire, your children alone!"

Mendacious as news and atrociously bad rhyme as poetry, this ritual verse of our childhood is of interest in that it inculcates the right relation between human beings and the little spotted beetles that are even now coming out of their winter quarters and appearing in our houses on warm, bright days.

For ladybird beetles are friends of man, among the best friends he has in the whole swarming insect world. Not that they have any particular intention of being so. They probably do not even know of the existence of our race, for like most beetles they are so shortsighted that they do not see beyond the first few millimeters of skin when we hold them in our hands. But their tastes in food run to exactly those pests of garden and orchard shrubs and trees that do us harm — scale insects, aphids, and their other evil kin. Ladybird beetles are not named according to their nature, for they are among the most ferociously carnivorous of all the lesser creatures in the world. By rights they should be called leopard beetles or some such name.

For a long time they were left to work for man without any help from him. Then the orange growers, driven nearly desperate by the scourge of scale insects, learned how to concentrate armies of the beetles in their orchards just when they were waking from their winter sleep, empty and demanding food. Now it has become a regular industry in California for men to go up into the Sierras, gather tons of pine needles containing the sleeping beetles, and sift them out for transportation to the lowlands. They are held in the artificial winter of cold storage plants until their help is needed in clearing up the groves, when they are thawed out and released.

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