

Oriental Institute Communica-
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**FIRST REPORT OF THE
PREHISTORIC SURVEY
EXPEDITION**

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This survey of the geology of the Nile is a first effort to rediscover those chapters of the history of man in Egypt which are missing from the written records. The study of prehistoric man has been steadily advancing in Europe for two generations past but only slight progress in such studies has been made in the Nile Valley.

These findings, as well as the other discoveries made in this region, have a direct bearing on the work of archeologists, who can, with this geological information, carry their explorations to a greater degree of exactitude.

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Limitations of Physics

Physica

BERTRAND RUSSELL, in *Philosophy*
(Norton):

It is chiefly through ideas derived from sight that physicists have been led to the modern conception of the atom as a centre from which radiations travel. We do not know what happens in the centre. The idea that there is a little hard lump there, which is the electron or proton, is an illegitimate intrusion of common-sense notions derived from touch. For aught we know, the atom may consist entirely of the radiations which come out of it. It is useless to argue that radiations cannot come out of nothing. We know that they come, and they do not become any more really intelligible by being supposed to come out of a little lump.

Modern physics, therefore, reduces matter to a set of events which proceed outward from a centre. If there is something further in the centre itself, we cannot know about it, and it is irrelevant to physics.

Physics is mathematical, not because we know so much about the physical world, but because we know so little: it is only its mathematical properties that we can discover. For the rest, our knowledge is negative.

Science News-Letter, March 17, 1928

Rickets in Art—Continued

most cases to ignorance and improper care of the infant. City women devote much less time and care to their infants than those in the rural districts, hence the more frequent occurrence of these deformities among the infants of city dwellers."

Solicitous modern mothers who pour the daily ration of cod liver oil into their protesting offspring regardless of kicks and howls, will regard with interest the dig at the parental carelessness of the ancient Roman ladies.

The art of the Greeks and Romans shows little evidence of rickets probably for two reasons: first, because their artists were idealistic rather than realistic and represented in their statues and paintings only idealized forms of gods and royalty; and second because they lived in the warm countries of the south of Europe, where the small amount of clothing people wore left their bodies exposed to the anti-rachitic action of the sun.

It is interesting to note the criticism of Solanus of Ephesus in this connection. It has been conjectured that children of the upper classes living in Italy and Greece may have been subject to the deformities of rickets because they were brought up in seclusion in the marble courtyards of their patrician parents where they were free from the contaminating influence of *hoi polloi* and incidentally from the beneficent action of sunlight.

The husky peasant *bambini* running naked on the warm slopes of Italy could have had little to fear from the deforming after-effects of rickets.

The up-to-date female parent, brandishing her cod liver oil bottle, will probably say that the old Greek physicians were only following the common custom of trying to blame it all on the women anyway.

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Out of 90,000 fatal accidents in this country, almost 22 per cent. occurred to children under 14 years of age.

Russian citizens are being given gas masks and taught how to use them, for protection against war gas or other emergencies.

Radio stations in 25 states will help to spread information to farmers on ways and means of fighting the European corn borer.

Medical Astronomy

History of Science

WALTER CLYDE CURRY, in *Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences* (Oxford Press):

But undoubtedly John of Burgundy would have applauded the union of theory and practice in Chaucer's Doctor, against whom his strictures upon certain improperly equipped practitioners in the time of the pestilences could not have been leveled. "Ther have bene many grete maistirs," complains John of Burgundy, "and ferre lernyd in theoric or speculation and groundly in sight of medecyne, but they bene litill proued in practik and therto allefully ignorant in the science of Astronomy, the which science is in phisik wonder nedefull . . . for why astronomye and phisik rectifien yche other in effect and also that one science sheweth forthe many thynges hidde in the other. . . . And I 40 yere and more have oftyn tymes proued in practise that a medecyn gyven contrary to the constellacion all thogh hit were both wele compownyd or medled and ordynatly wrought after the science of phisik yet it wrought nowther aftur the purpose of the worcher nor to the profite of the pacient. . . . Wherefore they that have not dronkyn of that swete drynke of Astronomye mowe putte to thise pestilentiall sores no perfitte remedie, for bicause that they knowe not the cause and the qualitie of the siknesse they may not hele it. . . . He that knowith not the cause hit is onpossible that he heyl the sikenes. The comentour also *super secundum phisicorum* seith thus: A man knowith not a thing but if he knowe the cause both ferre and nygh. Sithen therfor the heavenly or firmamentall bodies bene of the first and primytif causes, it is behovefull to have knowlechyng of hem; for yf the first and primytif causes be onknown, we may not come to know the causes secondary. Sithen therfor the first cause bryngeth in more plenteuously his effecte than doth the cause secondary . . . therfor it shewith wele that without Astronomy litill vayleth phisik, for many man is perished in defawte of his counceleur." Indeed, a knowledge of astronomy is so absolutely essential in medical practice that Hippocrates is credited with having said, "The medical man, whatever else he may be, cannot be considered a perfect physician if he is ignorant of astronomy; no man ought to commit himself into his hands."

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