

GEOGRAPHY

America Really Alberica, Old Czech Paper Shows

WHEN the geographer Martin Waldseemüller in 1507 gave America its present name, in honor of Vespucci, the Italian navigator who he thought had discovered the New World, he committed a double error. For Vespucci's first name was not Americus or Amerigo, but Albericus or Alberico. To be consistent, this continent should be called Alberica.

This curious fact has been disclosed by a newly published Czech study of an ancient communication from Vespucci, recently issued in Prague, a copy of which has been received by Dr. Ales Hrdlicka of the U. S. National Museum. It is a reprint of an account of one of Vespucci's voyages, which had been translated out of its original Italian into Latin, and thence into Czech, appearing in Prague in 1504. After reposing on the shelves of monastery libraries for over four centuries, it at last came to light in the library of the National Museum at Prague. The present republication gives a facsimile reproduction of the brief paper in its original black-letter Czech text, a transliteration in modern Czech, and translations in English and Spanish, together with a critical commentary by C. Straka, librarian of the Strahov Monastery.

In this pamphlet, the principal part of which is a report in letter form from

PSYCHOLOGY

Child in Small Family Held Most Intelligent

CHILDREN in large families have less intelligence than those in small families, Dr. Shepherd Dawson, British psychologist, has announced. Individual mental tests given to large numbers of children of approximately the same social status revealed a small but significant negative correlation between a child's intelligence and the number of his brothers and sisters, he said. This is encouraging to only children, but may have serious consequences for future generations. Dr. Dawson urged further study on the inheritance of mental aptitudes.

Science News Letter, October 10, 1931

Vespucci to the Italian merchant prince, Lorenzo Piero Francesco di Medici, the navigator signed his first name as Alberico. The original Italian draft is lost, but the Latin translation gives the name as Albericus, and in the black-letter Czech text it is as Alberykus. Other writings of Vespucci before 1507 also give his first name as Albericus; he appears not to have been known as Amerigo or Americus before the publication of Waldseemüller's suggestion to name the New World after him. It is even possible that Vespucci may have got his name from the New World, instead of the other way about; for it is stated by some authorities now that one of the tribes discovered by early voyagers

PHYSICS

Scientist Says Universe Is Actually Exploding

THE UNIVERSE is actually exploding and the galaxies are scattering apart at a terrific rate, Sir Arthur Eddington, professor of astronomy at Cambridge University, contended before the British Association for the Advancement of Science hundredth anniversary meeting. In support of his contention he presented computations based solely on pure mathematical and physical theory, without the use of astronomical data. The rate of nebular recession thus obtained is in close accord with Dr. Edwin P. Hubble's Mt. Wilson Observatory figures for the red shift of nebular spectra.

Prof. Hubble said, "Detailed theories of stellar evolution are overshadowed by the fact that the time scale is again in the melting pot. With a rapid-expansion universe, a very long time scale of billions of years, fashionable recently, becomes exceedingly incongruous. We have to accept an age of ten to the tenth power or ten billion years for galaxies and presumably also for stars."

Since the age of the earth alone, derived through the radioactive method, is over a billion years this embarrasses as-

Spis o nových zemiach Zlo novem
svietie O niemyto gšme prave žadne
znamosti nariele Zni fdy 130 slychali



TOWARD "ALBERICA"

Title-page of 427-year-old report of the adventures of Albericus (not Americus) Vespuccius and his associates in the New World. Published in Prague, 1504.

called themselves by a name that sounded something like "Amerigé."

Science News Letter, October 10, 1931

tronomers, geologists and biologists. Prof. Eddington derived the actual rate of expansion of the universe from the wave equation for the electron, which is the fundamental equation of the modern quantum theory. This equation, adapted to the curvature of space, contains the term: "the square root of the number of electrons in the universe divided by the radius of the universe in a state of equilibrium," which term is the mass of the electron, usually written: $\frac{M C^2}{E^2}$.

Combined with the formulae of the relativity theory, this gives the principal data of the size of the universe. Its original radius was 1,070,000,000 light-years, before it started expanding. Its rate of expansion is 528 kilometers per second per megaparsec, compared with 465 derived from the Hubble astronomical data. It is over a hundred miles per second for each million light-years' distance. "The close accordance of the theory with observation forces acceptance of an alarmingly rapid dispersal of nebulae, with important consequences in limiting the time available for evolution," Prof. Eddington concluded.

Science News Letter, October 10, 1931