



COLUMBUS CAME LATE

By Gregory Mason

"... provides a fascinating evening for those interested in the history and achievements of the American Indians."

—NEIL M. JUDD of the United States National Museum, Washington, D. C.

This book takes its readers on a voyage of discovery in which they come upon mysteries whose existence Columbus did not even suspect when his vessel sighted shore. Here the lost civilizations of those earliest Americans—the Aztecs, the Mayas, the Incas, the Toltecs, the Pueblos, etc., are revealed in all of their vanished grandeur. And one is made to realize that the real adventure, after all, was not for Columbus and the Spaniards who followed him in their destroying search for gold. It belonged instead to those first Americans who pushed their way into new unpeopled continents "with no more capital than a kit of extra primitive stone tools and no food in sight. For these, as centuries rolled along, erected a series of splendid civilizations on utterly new economic and social foundations. Gregory Mason is right in his pleas that modern America should look back upon ancient America with respect, sympathy and gratitude, and that the solving of some of the ancient riddles might well become a national pastime for those who wish to exercise their wits as well as their muscles."

—HERBERT J. SPINDEN, Curator of Ethnology of the Brooklyn Museum.

KERMIT ROOSEVELT says: "... a very valuable contribution... that will undoubtedly prove of value to the scientist and of interest to the general reader."

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MEDICINE

New Anesthetic Found in Accordance With Prediction

A NEW general anesthetic for use in surgical operations, which is more rapid and efficient than ether, chloroform or the anesthetic gases, has been discovered in accordance with a prediction of Dr. C. D. Leake, professor of pharmacology at the University of California Medical School, Dean Langley Porter has announced.

The new anesthetic is called divinyl oxide. It is chemically related to ether and ethylene and will probably be given in the same way that ether is. However, it is superior in several ways.

Recovery is more rapid when divinyl oxide is used for an operation than when ether is used. There is less excitement and less nausea with the new anesthetic. There is also less irritation of the lungs and less disturbance of the body's chemical equilibrium. The heart action is not greatly changed.

Divinyl oxide is a liquid which boils at a low temperature. It is inflammable and as explosive as ether.

Associated with Dr. Leake in the work leading to this discovery were Mrs. Mei-Yu Chen Mai, now in Peiping, China; Dr. P. K. Knoefel, Fellow of the National Research Council; and Dr. A. E. Guedel, Los Angeles anesthesiologist.

While investigating the anesthetic action of ether and ethylene at the Univer-

sity of Wisconsin, Dr. Leake predicted that divinyl oxide, chemical relative of these substances, would prove valuable.

At his request, it was produced in a chemically pure form by Dr. R. T. Major and Dr. W. L. Ruigh of Princeton University and the Merck Laboratory for Pure Research at Rahway, N. J. It was then given a trial and as a result the world has a new anesthetic.

Clinical evaluation of the new anesthetic is still proceeding at the University of California Hospital under the supervision of Dr. H. C. Naffziger, professor of surgery, and Dr. D. Wood.

The experiments leading to this discovery were made possible by financial aid from public-spirited citizens, chiefly the Christine Breon Research Fund, Dean Porter said.

Science News Letter, December 19, 1931

HYGIENE

Helmets May Replace Caps For Sailors in Tropics

THE TRADITIONAL wide trousers and sailor collars of the enlisted man in the U. S. Navy may be abandoned in one branch of the service and the "gob" on duty in tropical waters may have a helmet to wear instead of the usual diminutive white cap.

Some such change is recommended as a health measure by Surgeon General Charles E. Riggs in his annual report to the Secretary of the Navy.

The jaunty cap of the sailor cannot be depended upon to protect him from the rays of the tropical sun, Surgeon General Riggs pointed out. The officer's cap is similarly criticized although to a less extent because of the visor and of a reduction in exposure time.

"The remedy recommended, not as a substitution but an addition, is the ventilated helmet," the report said.

The large collar and wide trouser-bottom of the regular uniform are thought by some to constitute an unnecessary extra hazard in ground service in aviation. The question of suitable clothing thus becomes a special problem for that branch of the service, in the opinion of the Surgeon General.

Science News Letter, December 19, 1931

METEOROLOGY

Radio Waves Not Guilty Of Upsetting Weather

RADIO does not cause droughts or affect the weather in any other way, the U. S. Weather Bureau has determined. Many appeals have come to the Weather Bureau to have radio broadcasting suppressed on the ground that it burns up the water vapor of the air or otherwise decreases rainfall.

"However much radio may be affected by the weather, especially by the thunderstorm, no element of the weather is affected in turn by radio," said Dr. W. J. Humphreys, U. S. Weather Bureau meteorological physicist, in an official summary. "We know this from experiment and observation, and we know it from theory as well," he declared.

Science News Letter, December 19, 1931