

EUGENICS

Eugenicists Urged to Drop Cattle Breeding Analogy

EUGENICISTS ought to stop comparing their program for improving the human race with the cattle breeder's program for improving his cows. It only gets them public misunderstanding and hostility, warned Robert Cook, editor of the *Journal of Heredity*, in an address before the Third International Congress of Eugenics.

"If eugenic reform is really to make progress, must we not show how eugenic ideas and ideals fit into the picture of everyday affairs?" Mr. Cook asked his audience. "This must be done in a way that does not offend the prejudices and notions of intelligent people.

"An example of what is meant is the linking of eugenics with stockbreeding, which is sometimes rather naively done by professed eugenicists. Is this analogy either accurate or good policy? The underlying laws are, it is true, the same, but the stock breeder's technique, intended to produce a uniform type, suitable for a definite and circumscribed purpose, is not and cannot be the technique of the eugenicist, who deals with 'forces under social control.' An ideal of a uniform 'superior type' is not at present either racially or socially desirable.

"When we consider, furthermore, the violent emotional reactions which the stockbreeding analogy is likely to evoke its value in eugenic enlightenment is seen to be very problematical."

Science News Letter, August 27, 1932

PHYSICS

Oxygen Disintegrated With Neutron Projectiles

OXYGEN has been artificially disintegrated by bombardment with neutrons in experiments at the famous Cavendish laboratory at Cambridge.

Oxygen is the common gas of the air that all of us breathe and neutrons are the new fundamental particles of matter, close combinations of proton and electron, that were recently discovered.

The disintegration is announced in a communication to *Nature* by Dr. N. Feather of Cambridge.

Photographs were obtained of the recoil and paired tracks of the results of the disintegration produced in an oxygen-filled expansion chamber. Polonium

and beryllium at the center of the chamber provided the neutrons which hit and smashed the oxygen atoms.

The capture of the incident neutron seems likely in all observations made by Dr. Feather and he concludes that the disintegration particle is almost certainly an alpha particle or the heart of a helium atom.

The results show an absorption of energy and confirm Mme. Curie's recent suggestion that a small fraction of the beryllium radiation has a higher energy than the previous upper limit.

Although Lord Rutherford in 1919 and succeeding years performed the first artificial disintegrations of a number of elements, notably nitrogen, by bombardment with alpha rays, he did not break down oxygen. His colleague has now done so, using neutrons.

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CHEMISTRY

Smaller Loaves and Cakes From Rust-Diseased Wheat

WHEAT ATTACKED by the leaf-rust fungus yields soft grain that mills into flour which in turn yields smaller loaves and cakes per unit of weight than those obtainable from undiseased grain. That is, in condensed summary, the result of investigations by Prof. H. R. Kraybill and associates of Purdue University, as reported to the American Chemical Society. Prof. Kraybill also stated that wheat from rusted grain had less protein and more starch than healthy wheat; it yielded flour slightly lower in protein and bran, and middling much lower in protein.

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