

consists of water or 'occult dropsy,'" Dr. Strauss said in reporting his latest studies on the condition.

In many cases this condition leads to what physicians term eclampsia, with convulsions and coma, or complete loss of consciousness, which frequently results in the death of both mother and child.

Studies which he began five years ago suggested that many of the toxemias which take such a toll of mothers and in-

fant are the result of diets lacking proper nutritive qualities. For example, if the expectant mother does not receive enough iron in her diet, one type of anemia results. If she eats food low in the vitamin B complex, she may get a form of nerve paralysis or a primary type anemia. The importance of protein in the the expectant mother's diet is the latest discovery Dr. Strauss has made in the course of these studies.

*Science News Letter, May 18, 1935*

#### ARCHAEOLOGY

## Writing by Babylonian Wife Tells of Buying Second Wife

**L**ETTERS written by women of old Babylonia are harder to decipher than the writings of male correspondents, but more interesting to read.

Thus is letter writing of 4,000 years ago summed up by John B. Alexander, graduate student of Yale, who has deciphered love letters, royal messages, and business documents in the Yale Babylonian Collection.

The surprising discovery of a Babylonian wife purchasing a second wife for her husband was mentioned by Mr. Alexander as he reported his researches before the Semitic and Biblical Club at Yale.

Describing this strange business transaction, Mr. Alexander said:

"The record of the purchase of a second wife is in the form of an adoption, the first wife adopting the second wife as her sister and giving her to her husband as a wife.

"The possibility that all might not go smoothly is provided against in the stipulation that if the husband should decide to divorce his first wife, she shall take away with her all the property of the second wife. But if the first wife becomes jealous and wishes to leave her husband, she shall have nothing!"

The picture of women attempting to get money from men is as old as Babylonia, as shown in a letter described by Mr. Alexander:

"Tarish-matum writes to Kubutum begging him to send her a shekel of silver. She has written ten times and he hasn't answered her. She hasn't a single measure of meal. In the name of Pa-bil-sag, would he send her one shekel. A second part is appended to the letter, ad-

dressed to another man, asking him in honeyed words to use his influence and see that Kubutum sends her the money."

This shows that people in Babylonia sometimes could not read and had to have their letters read to them, for the second part of this letter was not intended for the eyes of the tight-fisted Kubutum.

Another ancient "gold-digger" resorted to poetry, calling the man addressed "her cedar in whose shadow she finds shelter." The home of her fathers, she explained, would have to be sold. But all she asks is enough to bury her. The reply to this eloquent appeal has not been found.

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#### PHARMACOLOGY

## Pharmacist Given Highest Professional Award

**T**HE Remington Honor Medal, highest award in pharmacy, was awarded for 1935 to Samuel Louis Hilton, retail pharmacist of Washington. Dr. Hilton receives this award for his many years of service to his profession and particularly for his efforts in connection with the building of the American Institute of Pharmacy which was completed this year.

Dr. Hilton is a native of Washington and has conducted a retail pharmacy here for 46 years in addition to giving much time to activities of pharmaceutical associations. All the medicine given to the late William Howard Taft, former President and Chief Justice, was prepared by Dr. Hilton.

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#### ORNITHOLOGY

## Voices of Southern Birds Recorded For Movie Films

**W**ANTED: the sweetest-voiced mockingbird in the South.

This is not the announcement of a radio audition for budding opera stars down in Dixie, but part of a sober scientific program being carried on by the Cornell University-American Museum Ornithological Expedition, now in the field in the Gulf Coast region. The scientists in charge have already succeeded in recording the voices of several mockingbirds, and when they played them again, in a Georgia garden, they drove all the other mockingbirds in the neighborhood crazy. They flew frantically about, and even peered into the apparatus, seeking the singer.

The expedition is travelling in a truck specially equipped for taking motion pictures and song records of birds. It even has a light tower which can be run up quickly on top, to get the observers and records into the birds' treetop homes. This set-up has caused a good deal of excited interest among the people of the countryside as well as among the birds.

Already, reports Dr. A. A. Allen of Cornell University, leader of the expedition, a considerable number of birds have been placed on record. These include wild turkey, bald eagle, fish hawk, wood ibis, egret, pelican, cormorants and various species of gulls and other shore birds. Less familiar species which have also been filmed and recorded are limpkin, anhinga, Audubon's caracara and the exceedingly rare sandhill crane.

One of the main objectives of the expedition has been to find the ivory-billed woodpecker, which is now very near extinction. Ten years ago, after it was thought to be extinct, Dr. Allen rediscovered a few last individuals in a remote cypress swamp of central Florida, and he recently completed a search in the same region for a final remnant of this beautiful bird, but as yet without success. At present the expedition is in Louisiana, where a few ivory-bills still remain, and Dr. George Sutton, the artist of the expedition, making studies from life of the ivory-bill and other rare species.

The expedition is a joint enterprise of Cornell University and the American Museum and is being financed by A. R. Brand of the Museum, who is also an associate in ornithology at Cornell University.

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