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SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Dysgenic

"One constant source of danger to the social health of mankind is the trend for war to increase in frequency and intensity as civilization becomes more complex. . . . Aside from the moral issues involved, modern warfare imposes heavy economic burdens upon nations because of the cost of mechanization for attack by land, sea, and air. The chief argument against it, however, is that it is seriously dysgenic. The mass slaughter of select youths means the deliberate elimination of the fit and the survival of the unfit. If this process is carried far enough, it will lead inevitably to the lowering of the genetic constitution of the race."—Carl J. Warden in **THE EMERGENCE OF HUMAN CULTURE** (*Macmillan*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

ASTRONOMY

Measure Shadows

"The explorations of space end on a note of uncertainty. And necessarily so. We are, by definition, in the very center of the observable region. We know our immediate neighborhood rather intimately. With increasing distance, our knowledge fades, and fades rapidly. Eventually, we reach the dim boundary—the utmost limits of our telescopes. There, we measure shadows, and we search among ghostly errors of measurement for landmarks that are scarcely more substantial."—Edwin Hubble in **THE REALM OF THE NEBULAE** (*Yale*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

PALEONTOLOGY

Wise

"Unfortunately for the modern paleontologists, not many ancient men who witnessed floods of any sort were foolish enough to get caught in them. Even their distant ancestors in the early Cenozoic were by that time sufficiently sagacious to avoid the tar pools, swamps, and quicksands which trapped their less knowing mammalian contemporaries. This is one reason that all primate skeletons, including those of lemuroids, apes, and monkeys, as well as those of man, are relatively rare as fossils. When man at last began to bury his dead, and his remains therefore become more common, the story has largely been inherited by the anthropologists. But there is also a growing store of geological data con-

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cerning our relatively recent ancestors."—Carey Croneis and William C. Krumbin in **DOWN TO EARTH** (*U. Chicago*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

METEOROLOGY

Pollution

"To the solid impurities carried into the atmosphere from volcanoes and deserts must be added that which comes as smoke from industrial, domestic and forest fires. The amount thus contributed may be unimportant in respect of the atmosphere as a whole, but it is in fact sufficient to affect the climate of the great industrial cities of Britain through the disturbance of the normal composition of the atmosphere by the addition of carbon, tar and sulphur compounds, and by the cutting off of a considerable fraction of sunlight or daylight from the areas in which the great cities are located."—Sir Napier Shaw in **MANUAL OF METEOROLOGY, Vol. II: Comparative Meteorology** (*Cambridge-Macmillan*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

PHYSICS

Jungle

"All matter is stuffed full of electricity, and in fact all matter *is* electricity. Of this there are two kinds, the positive and the negative. The negative electricity is composed of the very small, very light, very mobile, very agile particles which are called *electrons* (the commonest word in modern physics). . . . But in addition, in all these solid substances there is a rigid skeleton or framework, which is really the strong and massive portion of the solid; and with this framework the positive electricity is tightly bound. One may think of a solid body as a three-dimensional jungle, in which there are countless trees and countless nimble little animals; the massive motionless trees correspond to the positive electricity, and the footloose quick-moving beasts to the negative electrons."—Karl K. Darrow in **THE RENAISSANCE OF PHYSICS** (*Macmillan*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

THE FIELDS

CONSERVATION

Watching

"The story goes that an old Nebraska farmer was sitting on his porch during a dust storm. Asked what he was watching so intently, he replied: 'I'm counting the Kansas farms as they go by.'"

"The people of America have been sitting on their porches watching their continent go by. . . . It is not a little tragic that we should sit on our porches while this great, good continent goes out from under us."—Stuart Chase in *RICH LAND, POOR LAND* (*Whittlesey*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

GENERAL SCIENCE

Infinite Variety

"First of all let us think of the variety of animals and plants. Most people do not realize how many different kinds there are. For instance, in England alone the number of different kinds of birds to be found is about 300, of butterflies and moths more than 2,000, and of beetles about 3,500. The number of different kinds of animals in the world is more than half a million, and every year scientists are discovering new ones, especially in the tropical regions. Of plants, too, there are several hundred thousand separate sorts."—Julian Huxley and E. N. daC. Andrade in *MORE SIMPLE SCIENCE* (*Harpers*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

PHILOSOPHY

For Charm

"When clothing became something more than an adornment it served partly to indicate the married status of a loyal wife, partly to accentuate the form and beauty of woman. For the most part primitive women asked of clothing precisely what later women have asked—not that it should quite cover their nakedness, but that it should enhance or suggest their charms. Everything changes, except woman and man."—Will Durant in *THE FOUNDATIONS OF CIVILIZATION* (*Simon & Schuster*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

HISTORY

Ancient Faddists

"Fashionable physicians earned large incomes, especially those who advertised themselves by some novelty. In Nero's time we hear of Crinas from Massilia, who combined astrology with medicine, leading his patients to understand that the 'influence' of the stars at favorable moments would second the beneficial effect of the prescribed diet and medicines. Greek Massilia produced many doctors, among them another fashionable practitioner of Nero's day, Charmis, noted for his cold-water cures and the high fees his renown enabled him to charge."—Frank Gardner Moore in *THE ROMAN'S WORLD* (*Columbia*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

ZOOLOGY

The Dog

"There are remarkably few references to the dog in the Bible, and the first mention concerns the Israelites in Egypt. The Hebrews despised the dog and this derogatory view was undoubtedly induced as a reaction to the honorable position he occupied in Egyptian affairs. The Mohammedans and Hindus share the early Jewish feeling for the dog, and the word is used in those countries as a most unflattering term.

"In ancient Egypt the dog was a symbol of divinity and its figure appears on temple decorations. According to Herodotus, when a dog died the members of the family shaved—the usual expression of mourning."—Alfred W. Meyer in *DOGS* (*Whittlesey*).

Science News Letter, October 24, 1936

CHEMISTRY

Justification

"Unquestionably the most important development of modern alchemy, so far as can be seen at present, is the creation of radioactive elements. . . . There seems little doubt that before long the number and variety of radioactive substances will be increased to such an extent that artificial radioactive substances will take the place of radium; and it does not seem too much to hope that radiations that are exclusively beneficial may be available for curative purposes. If this is so, then we need go no further to find a justification for all the magnificent effort that has been expended in exploring the nature and behavior of the atom."—Dorothy Fisk in *MODERN ALCHEMY* (*Appleton*).

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