

small, known amounts of methylcholanthrene.

When these test tubes were radiated with ultraviolet light large numbers of yeast cells were destroyed overnight. Similar tubes, containing equal amounts of methylcholanthrene but not radiated with ultraviolet light, showed a stimulating growth to the yeast cells when left over night. Care was taken to see that the ultraviolet light used was not itself capable of destroying the yeast cells.

It is impossible to say whether methylcholanthrene caused cancer in the yeast cells, said Dr. Cole in an interview. Certainly the combination of ultraviolet light and methylcholanthrene killed the cells, but it seems possible that the lethal effect was a photochemical one.

Such a hypothesis might also explain surface cancers in animals and in man. But it is difficult to see how photochemical effects could create internal cancers, reports Dr. Cole.

Large numbers of yeast cells are used in the study so that the lethal effects can be worked out on a statistical basis and high accuracy attained.

Describing future work, Dr. Cole said:

"While our work has been done only on yeast cells, the increased sensitivity of the method suggests that it might be useful in animal experimentation on rats and perhaps, eventually, on humans. If such future work is done it would be to detect methylcholanthrene in the blood serum."

*Science News Letter, December 31, 1938*

#### MEDICINE

### Hay Fever Successfully Treated with Potassium

**T**HE SUCCESSFUL treatment of hay fever with potassium salts is given a preliminary report by Dr. Benson Bloom of Tucson, Ariz. (*Journal, American Medical Association, Dec. 17.*)

Striking benefit was obtained by 29 patients given potassium chloride, Dr. Bloom reports.

The method is simple and no complications or "side effects" were noted, although further studies are indicated, he declares.

These salts also were successfully used by Dr. Bloom in treating several cases of urticaria (hives), eczema, nasal polypsis, chronic allergic sinusitis and migraine.

In cases of chronic asthma the same treatment helped not at all

*Science News Letter, December 31, 1938*

#### PSYCHOLOGY

## Psychologists Protest Nazi Persecution of Jews

**D**ECLARING that no conclusive evidence has been found for racial or national differences in either intelligence or personality, psychologists issued an official protest against the "non-scientific interpretations" of racial psychology which "Fascists are using to justify persecution." These theories have been developed, they said, not on basis of fact but under domination of powerful emotion.

Prepared by psychologists who are specialists on racial psychology after a survey of scientific investigations in this field, the protest was issued officially by the Council of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

"There is no evidence for the existence of an inborn Jewish or German or Italian mentality," the statement declares. "Furthermore, there is no indication that the members of any group are rendered incapable by their biological heredity of

completely acquiring the culture of the community in which they live. . . .

"The Nazi theory that people must be related by blood in order to participate in the same cultural or intellectual heritage has absolutely no support from scientific findings."

Members of the Council are: Dr. F. H. Allport, Syracuse University, Dr. Gordon Allport, Harvard University, Dr. J. F. Brown, Kansas University, Dr. Hadley Cantril, Princeton University, Dr. L. W. Doob, Yale University, Dr. H. B. English, Ohio State University, Dr. Franklin Fearing, University of California, L. A., Dr. George W. Hartmann, Columbia University, Dr. I. Krechevsky, University of Colorado, Dr. Gardner Murphy, Columbia University, Dr. T. C. Schneirla, New York University, and Dr. E. C. Tolman, University of California.

*Science News Letter, December 31, 1938*

#### GEOLOGY

## Earth's Magnetic Forces of Ice Age Epoch Determined

**R**ECORDS of the earth's magnetism back in the ice ages, thousands of years ago, have now been traced out by scientists at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, it was reported to the Philosophical Society of Washington.

A. G. McNish and E. A. Johnson described how new and delicate apparatus makes it possible to discover that the magnetic north of the compass in that long past era was about 60 degrees west of where it is today. The magnetic north pole of the earth was then somewhere on a line between Edmonton, Alberta, and New York City instead of in the neighborhood of Hudson Bay.

The records of the earth's past magnetism have come from sedimentary layers laid down in the ice age, said the scientists. These layers consisted of silt that dropped to the bottoms of ancient streams and lake beds. Particles of magnetic materials in the silt fell so that their magnetic properties were oriented with the direction of the earth's magnetic field at that particular time.

Finally, as the sedimentary material turned to clays and stone, the magnetic particles became embedded and fixed in position and have remained so, in general, since that time.

What was needed to make the discoveries was a delicate instrument which could measure the magnetism of samples of these ancient deposits.

*Science News Letter, December 31, 1938*

#### MEDICINE

### Severe Liver Damage From Sulfanilamide

**F**IVE cases of severe liver damage resulting from treatment with sulfanilamide, new chemical remedy used for a wide variety of germ diseases, are reported by Dr. Curtis F. Garvin of Cleveland to the American Medical Association. (*Journal of American Medical Association, Dec. 17.*)

A case of definite sensitization to the new drug is also reported by Dr. E. B. Rogers of El Paso, Tex.

*Science News Letter, December 31, 1938*