

PHYSIOLOGY

**Ragweed Grows in Japan,
But Doesn't Cause Sneezes**

LOW ragweed, one of the most evil of American hay-fever plants, is abundant in Japan but apparently causes no sneezes, Saburo Katsura, Japanese scientist at present in this country, informs Science Service. Mr. Katsura is a graduate student at the University of Maryland and also is a temporary scientific aide in the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Although ragweed has been in Japan for many years, nobody has ever paid much attention to it because it has caused little trouble, Mr. Katsura states. Learning of its ill repute in America, he sent home for some of its flowers and had the pollen tested by an American pollen specialist, Dr. R. P. Wodehouse of Yonkers, N. Y. Dr. Wodehouse reports that the pollen produced typical reaction in sensitive persons.

Mr. Katsura states that Japan is a land of no hay-fever. He has known only one Japanese hay-fever victim, a woman scientist who became sensitized to poplar pollen during a sojourn in England. After her return to Japan she continued to have attacks every spring, but when a poplar tree that grew in her neighborhood was cut down the attacks ceased. Mr. Katsura has been in correspondence with Japanese physicians, who confirm his statement, and who add that foreigners in Japan are also free of hay-fever.

Nobody knows when the American ragweed invaded Japan. Its presence was first mentioned in print about 45 years ago, so that it probably sneaked in as a stowaway on one of the first American ships to visit Japanese ports after commercial relations between the two countries were opened up.

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ETHNOLOGY

**"Grandmother" of Natives
Tells Amazing Life Story**

ONE OF the amazing adventures in anthropological science is the 35-year stay of Daisy Bates, Irish woman, among her "grandchildren," the Australian natives.

Imagine Mrs. Bates, a news correspondent in London in the gay nineties. An assignment came to investigate reports of white settlers' cruelty to Australian aborigines. She sailed to get her story, and later remained to bury herself, most people would think, among the

pathetic, bewildered blacks who needed her.

Now, 78 years old, Daisy Bates tells her all but incredible experiences in a vigorous book, "Passing of the Aborigines."

Her idea in Australia was to treat the sick, provide food and other necessities for the aged and children, help the natives meet the baffling invasion of civilization. It was a grandmotherly role, and the natives accepted her as Kabbarli, or grandmother.

To understand them, she went to lengths that few anthropologists have rivaled. She reasoned that she must think with a "black man's mind" and talk his language. Notebook in hand, she began by compiling a dictionary of words and sentences used in the Broome district and she ended by speaking 188 dialects.

She roved among the tribes, a dignified figure with a protecting veil on her hat and gloves on her hands. The gloves often aroused private and press comment. But they were her safeguard against infection as she bathed septic sores and treated repulsive ills. Once she forgot her gloves, and got an infected finger that took six months to heal. She never has approved of hospital beds for natives.

A character for legends is Daisy Bates: She quelled a native uprising by clever debate and a tea party. She guided rival tribes through a peaceful exhibition of tribal life, using a red umbrella as a signal.

She acted as government attaché with an anthropological expedition led by Prof. Radcliffe-Brown, served as justice of the peace for two Australian states. In 1933, the late King George V created her a Commander of the Order of the British Empire. That she considers a "full reward."

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BOTANY

**Chromosomes Are Doubled
By Fungicide Treatment**

CHROMOSOMES in growing grain have their numbers doubled when the seed is treated with a fungicide distributed under the trade name "Granosan," Dr. Dontcho Kostoff of the Institute of Genetics in Moscow has discovered.

Seeds treated with the compound are not attacked by fungi, whereas seeds treated with colchicine are frequently killed by these parasitic forms, Dr. Kostoff points out.

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IN SCIENCE

GENERAL SCIENCE

**Birthday of Columbus Used
To Remind U. S. of Liberty**

THE BIRTHDAY of Christopher Columbus will be used to help Americans rediscover America. A group of scientists and professors organized as the American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom after striking reaffirmations of intellectual liberty on last Lincoln's Birthday have proclaimed the week of Oct. 8 as "American Rediscovery Week."

Cruel, inhumane, intellect-fettering events abroad and intolerance at home cause stirring opposition to "attempts to deny man's right to express his opinions freely and to share in the choice of his government," "dissemination of false racial theories that set man against man according to the color of his skin or the name of his grandfather," and "attempts to deny the foreign born and aliens the equal protection of laws which the Constitution guarantees them."

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CHEMISTRY

**New Kind of Vitamin
Is a Pyridine Derivative**

EVIDENCE of the possible existence of another kind of vitamin B, the eleventh food factor to be carved out of the original vitamin B by chemical and biological research, has been discovered by Prof. Paul Gyorgy and Robert E. Eckardt of the Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

Working with rats, they found that there are skin lesions that persist even though the rats are fed a diet containing the known necessary vitamins, including purified natural or synthetic vitamin B₆. Their conclusion (*Nature*) is that "the role played by the vitamin B₂ complex in dermatologic conditions has to be extended beyond B₆."

The new factor has not yet been named, but it is suggested that vitamin B₆ should be called pyridoxin, because it is a pyridine derivative containing several methoxy groups, and not adermin, referring to its dermatologic protection, now shown to be not complete.

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E FIELDS

MILITARY SCIENCE

German Fortifications Have Had Three Names

SIEGFRIED Line, alias Limes Line, alias Westwall—that formidable German array of pillboxes and tank-traps has changed names twice.

Siegfried Line has romantic Wagnerian appeal. But there was a Siegfried Line that caved in, back in 1918.

Limes Line seems to have been derived from old Limes Germanicus built by Romans against German barbarians.

Westwall is strictly descriptive and noncommittal. It is pronounced "vest-wall," if you really want to approximate the German way of saying it.

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MEDICINE

Present New Challenge In Fight on Cancer

CANCER of the stomach kills between 40,000 and 50,000 persons in the United States each year, being responsible for about one-third of all cancer deaths. But many of these lives, perhaps 10,000 a year, could be saved.

This challenge to doctors and laymen appears in a new book, *End Results in the Treatment of Gastric Cancer* by Drs. Edward M. Livingston and George T. Pack (Hoerber). The book is technical, designed primarily for doctors, but many of the 65 conclusions are important for everyone to know.

"Cancer of the stomach is curable," the authors state. The only way to cure the condition at present is by a surgical operation. The chief point about stomach cancer is to determine, Drs. Livingston and Pack declare, whether or not the patient has a cancer which can be removed successfully.

From two-thirds to three-fourths of the patients with stomach cancers have cancers which cannot be removed by surgery at the time they are first seen. But this does not mean hope should be abandoned when stomach cancer is first suspected. Even at the time of death about one-fourth of those who died of stomach cancers were found at post mortem examinations to have tumors of

the kind that could have been removed.

About one-third of those who survive the operation are alive at the end of three years. One-fourth are living at five years, and one-fifth live more than 10 years from the time of discharge from the hospital. Many hundreds of persons lived and were well from 10 to 20 years following the operation. The figures are even more impressive when you consider that the average age at which the disease occurs is 61.2 years, an age at which about two-thirds of the patients would normally live only 10 years longer.

The layman can meet the challenge by getting medical attention promptly if he has any symptom that might mean stomach cancer—persistent indigestion, for example. Physicians can meet the challenge by seeing that the stomach cancer patient gets the operation that is his only chance of cure at present.

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HISTORY

Trace De Soto's Route To Mississippi River

THE WANDERING route that Hernando de Soto took to seek a fabled El Dorado and to find the great Mississippi River has been traced in 20 years of scientific investigation, in time for the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the historic expedition, in 1940 to 1943.

Few details regarding De Soto's journey through wilderness and swamp in Indian country from Florida to the Mississippi are any longer in doubt, is the verdict of Dr. John R. Swanton, Smithsonian Institution ethnologist and chairman of the U. S. De Soto Expedition Commission. Working with other members of the fact-finding commission, Miss Caroline Dorman of Chestnut, La., and Col. John R. Fordyce, of Little Rock, Ark., recently deceased, Dr. Swanton has identified places of the route in spite of tremendous changes in the countryside. Dr. Swanton's knowledge of Indian languages and customs proved an invaluable asset in the detective task of following the trail, 400 years cold.

The commission's report, just issued by Congress as an official document, will be used in arranging ceremonies and other recognition of the long exploration journey in the course of the next four years. A commemorative De Soto stamp and a memorial at the place where the Mississippi was first sighted will be considered at the next session of Congress.

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OCEANOGRAPHY

War Hazards Added To Icebergs and Derelicts

ADD to icebergs, half-sunken derelicts, uncharted reefs, rocks and shoals—War. The Hydrographic Office of the U. S. Navy, which regularly sends out warnings on navigational obstructions to U. S. shipping, has added the notice regarding the mining of the waters around Danzig, and states that further notices of war dangers will be added as the situation develops.

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CHEMISTRY—AGRICULTURE

Chemical Spray Makes Apples Look Redder

APPLS coming to market in future will have their cheeks reddened by a new chemical spray, discovered by Drs. R. B. Dustman and I. J. Duncan of the West Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station. It will be a natural glow, too—not a make-up job.

Natural red color of apples is due to a pigment known as idaein, earlier researches had shown. The two chemists at the experiment station undertook to find some chemical that would stimulate the formation of this pigment, and discovered it in several compounds involving the thiocyanate ion. These not only intensified the color of naturally red apples, but could induce a slight blush on yellow apples, like Grimes Golden, that normally have little or no red coloring.

Large-scale orchard spraying tests have now been made for four consecutive years, so that Drs. Dustman and Duncan state that they feel justified in announcing their results. (*Science*, Sept 8)

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Man May Have Developed From Several Centers

NOT just one birthplace for mankind, but several; that is the latest idea about the origin of the human species expressed by Dr. Franz Weidenreich, of Peiping Union Medical College, famed as discoverer of Peking man. Says Dr. Weidenreich: "One single center where all of mankind originated never existed. Man must have developed from different centers distributed over the world, each branch taking its own course more or less independently of the others. The result of this trend is manifested by the existence of the various races today."

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