

Letters To The Editor

Gently Optimistic

Congratulations on "Radioisotopes Cancer Aid" (SNL, Aug. 14, p. 99). Too few articles for lay consumption contain a paragraph such as the fourth one in that article. You are to be highly commended for inserting this and yet keeping a gently optimistic view of the cancer picture. Congratulations again.—S. F. Thomas, M. D., Palo Alto, Calif. *Thanks and we are glad to repeat that paragraph:*

No scientist would be foolhardy enough—or cruel enough to cancer victims—to hold out too much hope in individual cases. Nevertheless, the years of human life to be saved by future applications of radioisotopes promise to compensate many times over the loss of human life due to use of the atomic bomb in warfare—if the world can arrange not to use the atomic bomb as a weapon in the future.

No Freak This

I have the SNL, Aug. 21, with a picture of what looks like honey-comb on the cover. On page 26 I am informed that this is among the first pictures taken of molecules and that "each molecule is a sphere about four ten-thousandths of an inch in diameter." I got out a micrometer and set up on it .0004 and find that it is plainly visible to my unaided eye. I must be a freak.—Chas. C. Finn, Seattle, Wash.

Sadly we must tell you that we relied on a statement from the International Congress on Crystallography. Since checking with Dr. R. W. Wyckoff, who took the picture, we were informed that each little dot is approximately one-millionth of an inch in diameter.

Bison on Goering's Estate

I have seen European bison in museums

and also I saw a herd in June, 1938, at Goering's country estate some 40 miles from Berlin. They had some wisent bulls and they were breeding them with American cow bison. Whether any of the cows were pure wisent, I don't know. The wisent I have seen have been, generally speaking, smaller than the American bison and they had longer horns. Your picture (SNL, Aug. 21) seems to me to have horns longer in proportion than those of the American bison; also the shaggy mass of hair over the shoulders is less heavy than the American bison.—Godfrey L. Cabot, Boston, Mass.

Mankind's Salvation?

I read with surprise Mr. Vogt's plan for the salvation of mankind (SNL, Aug. 21, p. 118). He would save mankind by consistently reducing its numbers until there would be nobody left. What would he do then with the soil he would have consistently enriched and conserved? A better plan would be a program of educating those people who are denuding their soil to conserve and enrich it to a better and more efficient production as we are doing here in parts of the United States. Think of the possibility of being without Mr. Vogt himself if his parents had not responded to the powerful drives he speaks about that resulted in his being.—Judge Francis B. Allegretti, Elburn, Ill.

Fact Compilations Suggested

Every so often I go back to SNL, June 19, and again read with renewed interest "Laws of Matter Up-To-Date" by Helen M. Davis. To me this five-column article is a marvel of compact, useful, complete and important information the equal of which I have not seen elsewhere.

This suggests similar articles on various subjects that present themselves; for instance, the field of radiation from cosmic rays to the longest radio rays and everything in between, the elements arranged by number with their isotopes, and astronomy might be similarly treated. May we hope for something along these lines?—George W. Funck, M. D. (Retired), Englewood, Florida.

Others are in preparation, thanks. Our "Periodic Table of the Elements" 10" x 15" chart reprinted from December 1947 CHEMISTRY, a Science Service publication, is available at 25 cents each, 10 copies for \$1.00.

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