

ings around open courts when public spectacles were held. It remained for a less eminent person, a princeling of Crete, to make the dramatic gesture of building a place just for theatricals.

Crete, more than Egypt or Babylonia or other ancient lands, seems fitting soil for the sprouting of the theater germ.

In the other countries, religious spectacles were staged mainly in temples. The sacrifices and processions moved often in forests of columns. What the people could not see was just that much more mysterious and impressive.

Even Egypt's great passion play of the life of the god Osiris, which lasted for days, was a progressive affair moving about the city, now taking form as a procession, now a pageant scene, now a sham battle.

But religious and sporting events in Crete were so eye-filling and exciting that the Cretan public naturally wanted to see, and to see clearly. They would certainly have objected if admitted to a spectacle and then forced to see through pillars or over tall heads and shoulders. There had to be a theater.

*Science News Letter, March 10, 1934*

#### MEDICINE

### Cancer Research Center Established At Wisconsin

UNIVERSITY of Wisconsin officials and medical workers at Madison are jubilant at the prospect that the University may soon have one of the foremost cancer research centers in the country. The University has just received a bequest of \$300,000 from the late Miss Jean Bowman of Wisconsin Dells to found a cancer clinic and research center.

The state university has, at the present time, a cancer clinic centering about the Wisconsin General Hospital, which has been doing considerable clinical research work on cancer malignancies, but studies have been retarded due to lack of funds. Dr. E. A. Pohle, professor of radiology in the university medical school, is chairman of the Cancer Clinic and will probably head whatever clinical research work is decided upon for the new center.

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The American corn plant found its way to China some time before 1573, probably by the longest route—that is, carried to Europe by Spaniards, then to Mecca by Arabs, and thence through central Asia to China.

#### BIOPHYSICS

### Growth of Common Fungus Speeded by "Heavy Water"

WATER containing a very small proportion of the "heavy water" with double-weight hydrogen atoms was again proved to act as a stimulant to plant growth, in experiments performed by Samuel L. Meyer of the Vanderbilt University biology department, and reported to *Science*.

Mr. Meyer used water in which one out of every 214 hydrogen atoms was of the double weight variety, or "deuterium." With this he prepared nutrient solutions in which he grew cultures of the common blue mold that sometimes spoils oranges. On other solutions, containing no heavy water, he grew "control" cultures. After drying out the growths he compared their weights.

He found that the cultures grown on the heavy water solution weighed about sixteen times as much as the "controls" grown without heavy water. They gave evidence, moreover, of having remained more strongly in the vegetative state, whereas the "controls" had matured and passed over into the fruiting state.

Mr. Meyer therefore concludes that his experiments confirm those of other research workers who experimented on other forms of plant life, indicating that while high concentrations of heavy water act as poisons, very dilute solutions have a tonic effect, stimulating vegetative growth.

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#### GENERAL SCIENCE

### Honor Rewards Suggested For U. S. Scientists

"DOCTOR," asked a member of the House subcommittee on appropriations for the Department of Agriculture, "Do you have any compensation, either of distinction or of salary, with which to reward the men in the Department who make particularly valuable contributions to science or commerce?"

"No," replied Dr. Henry G. Knight, chief of the bureau of chemistry and soils.

Dr. Knight had just been discussing a new mineral oil process for the preservation of eggs worked out in the Department, also the use of a certain type of green paper for wrapping oily foods, such as potato chips and peanuts, so that

they will not become rancid over long periods of time.

"The paper," he said, "is called 'Coe green' after the name of the man in the bureau who originated it and developed the process. We have a public service patent on this so that anybody may use it. It is dedicated to the public. The vacuum carbon dioxide oil process for the preservation of eggs is also covered by a public service patent, but it is not yet in commercial use. Anybody can use that process."

House members were interested. One of them suggested that there should be a distinguished service cross or some method of recognition for the research worker. Just naming a paper bag or a process after the scientist who does valuable and strikingly original work, the Congressmen felt, was not quite enough.

Dr. C. A. Browne, chief of chemical and technological research in the bureau, pointed out, however, that the scientist is always entitled to the foreign rights and patents.

Dr. R. W. Skinner, assistant chief, chemical and technological research, said that unless the bureau published a report of the scientist's work and the patent number that some outsider might be able to get the patent in this country. "It has been done," he stated.

Items of interesting food research that held the attention of committee members were:

Utilization of turnips to make a sauerkraut "practically as satisfactory as that made from the cabbage."

Use of "apple wax" as an ingredient for automobile and furniture lacquer so that this quick-drying paint may be applied with a brush instead of being sprayed on. This process opens up a market for apple culls.

Use of pineapple juice on apples cut for drying, so that they will not turn dark.

Methods for handling soft-textured grapefruit in Texas for canning or putting up grapefruit juice.

Apple sirup for hot cakes, which is of finer flavor than the present commercial concentrated cider, due to the addition to the sirup of the first distillate, which carries the bouquet of the apple.

Curtailement of regular agricultural departmental funds for 1935 for agricultural investigations by \$40,301 will mean, Dr. Knight said, that there will be no studies on flavors and fermentations of sirups; such studies as the apple wax utilization will be cut about \$5,000; and others in similar amounts.

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