

PSYCHOLOGY

Scientists Seek Out Causes Of Person's Mental "Set"

In Very Early Childhood All Forms of Social Contact Begin Never-Ending Work of Building up Attitudes and Prejudices

THE ATTITUDES and prejudices that are so powerful in shaping man's actions for or against individuals, groups, or causes, are not inborn, yet they do depend on the accident of birth. In very early childhood, the influence of the social group begins its never-ending work of molding the mental "set" of the individual.

The careless comments of elders, the deliberate instruction of teachers, the voice of the radio, the talkies, and the press, all join with many other forces to contribute toward making the child into an adult who is militaristic or pacifistic, tolerant or tyrannical, liberal or conservative. Psychologists have recently been devoting considerable research to efforts to measure the attitudes of many different types of individuals and also to evaluate the effect on attitudes of various educational or influential devices.

Something of the way attitudes develop is told in a report to the *Journal of Social Psychology* by Dr. D. D. Droba of the University of North Dakota.

"If an individual is born into a society that is imbued with the war system, he will quickly become favorably disposed toward war," he writes. "If an individual is born into a society without a war system, such as the Eskimos, he will either develop no attitude toward war or he will develop one of an unfavorable sort.

"An interesting experiment had been performed by a Polish psychologist, F. Baumgarten. The date of the experiment was 1918, the place was Warsaw. It was performed during the German occupation of the Polish territory. The results were buried under the ground for fear that the Germans might seize them and punish the experimenter.

"She submitted a questionnaire to 360 Polish boys and 340 Polish girls to find out why children hate. Among the questions asked was one with respect to happenings that affected them most.

"The children cited a number of striking incidents such as explosions, the

cries or sobs of wounded or dying, the burning-up of the bridges and the plundering of the German soldiers.

"Another question was as to what they wished for the enemy. A series of punishing statements were given such as death, falling off a four-story building, and that all should go to hell alive. . ."

Thus do little children learn attitudes of hate.

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CHEMISTRY

Earth's Rarest Elements Held Once Abundant

WHY SOME elements are more abundant than others is a question that has long interested scientists because of its importance in any theory of the evolution of the elements. Certain relations to atomic numbers have been found, and many hypotheses have been proposed.

However, it does not seem to be always the most stable atoms that survive the atomic struggle for existence. For

instance, Drs. W. M. Elsasser and R. Guggenheimer point out, as reported in the *Comptes Rendus* of the French Academy of Sciences, that the noble gases neon, argon, krypton, xenon, which disdain to form any chemical combinations whatever with other elements and are among the most stable of the atoms, are exceedingly rare on this earth—whereas the elements which stand on either side of them in the periodic table, the metals sodium, potassium, rubidium, caesium on one side, and the acid-forming halogens fluorine, chlorine, bromine, iodine on the other side, which are chemically the most active elements known, are millions to billions of times more abundant.

By the loss of an electron from the nucleus, each of these noble gases is stepped up one atomic number and transmuted into the metal which stands next to it in the table—neon to sodium, argon to potassium, etc. By the loss of a positron, or of an alpha particle and an electron, from the nucleus, each is degraded one atomic number into the halogen just preceding it in the table—neon to fluorine, argon to bromine, etc.

Drs. Elsasser and Guggenheimer suggest that originally these noble gases were abundant in the earth's atmosphere, but that by millions of years of bombardment by neutrons they have been converted into these other elements, with have been incorporated in the earth's crust where we now find them in abundance, while the atmosphere has been almost completely denuded of the noble gases.

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PHYSIOLOGY

Spring Fever Really a Disease; Treatment, Cod Liver Oil

SPRING fever is not a joke after all, it now appears from latest medical research. It is actually a disease and physicians of the future will have to consider it as such and treat it "conscientiously with irradiated cod liver oil and sunshine, not with the sulfur and molasses of our fathers." This is the opinion of Dr. Joseph T. Smith, physician and assistant editor of the *Bulletin of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland*.

Spring fever, the disease, is a condition in which the body's stores of calcium are depleted.

"Capacity for work is lowered, physical fatigue easily occurs, and the patient's liability to disease is increased."

Dr. Smith quotes those words from a scientific description of calcium deficiency. But you might have written them yourself as a description of your own state on these first warm days of spring.

A real drop in the amount of calcium in the blood of normal persons during the winter months has been observed by Dr. J. W. Mull of Western Reserve Medical School, Dr. Smith reports, adding the following: *(Turn Page)*