the composition of the Chinese dragon, but the great bulk of him—and it was a really great bulk—remained (quite properly) reptilian.

It is even reported that tons of stony dinosaur fossils have been swallowed by centuries of generations of ailing Chinese, ground up into powder and mixed with wine, to restore strength and youth and make the world seem all right again. Well—Chinese wine is said to be potent!

Probably if the naive Chinese medical men could have had access to later Occidental scientific investigations, they would not have been so eager to prescribe dragons' bones so indiscriminately. For by no means all the dinosaurs were fierce and aggressive, if modern judgments are at all correct. Many of them, and practically all of the biggest, like the giant Brontosaurs for example, were probably as placid as cows, and much more stupid. Their teeth prove that they were vegetarians, and their skull-cavities allow space for a brain hardly larger than a teacup—and that to run an animal bigger than a house!

No, the Celestial physicians, if they were prescribing today, would without question insist on authentic Tyrannosaur bones for strength and fierceness, or Thalattosaur bones for skill in sea-faring, or the bones of the flying Pterodactyl for lightness and lifting up of the heart.

Science News Letter, July 28, 1934

Rare and famous dinosaur skeletons in the Royal Museum of Natural History in Brussels are beginning to deteriorate from the moisture in the air, and will be lost to science unless removed to glass enclosures.

MEDICINE

Death Predicted by Means of Spectroscopic Test of Blood

Patients In Extremis Are Subject to Profound Chemical Changes Affecting Color Elements in Blood

FORECASTING death by means of spectroscopic investigation of the blood of ailing patients was reported at the second annual International Spectroscopy Conference in session at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In several cases physicians attending the patients were of the opinion that death was imminent, it is reported, and were amazed to find the spectroscopic prediction verified within as small a time as 24 hours.

The report was made by P. and L. Lecompte de Nouy, two French scientists associated with the Pasteur Institute, who did not attend, but communicated their report to Prof. George R. Harrison of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, chairman of the conference, who delivered it in their absence.

Analyzing over 8,000 samples of the blood of men, horses, and sheep, these scientists have found that curves plotted by a spectroscopic examination of the serum and white plasma of the blood show remarkable constancy, "so great that they can be really superimposed on each other."

When departures from this general curve are noted, it is stated, it can be safely interpreted as an indication of pathological disturbances. Such alterations are rare and seem to correspond to fatal cases.

"Alterations in the curves," reads the report, "must correspond to very deep chemical modifications affecting the chromophoric (color) elements which belong to very stable chemical groups.

"We predicted a man's death, which followed in 24 hours. He was partly paralyzed, owing to a malignant tumor of the spine, with metastases in the lower jaw, and urinary infection. He was expected to live, however, for many months."

Science News Letter, July 28, 1934

PHYSICS

Explosion Sound Bears News of Stratosphere

EXPLORING the stratosphere by means of explosions set off on the earth's surface is one of science's new methods of gaining information about this mysterious region without leaving the ground.

The experiments are described by Dr. Kurt Wolcken of the University of Goettingen in the Berlin scientific journal *Forschungen und Fortschritte.*

It has often been observed, Dr. Wolcken writes, that a great explosion can only be heard within a radius of 80 to 100 miles. Beyond this limit there is a ring of silence, and then another zone, where the sound can again be heard. There is a skip zone for the sound just as there is for short radio waves.

Two theories have been proposed to explain the phenomenon. One is that the effect is due to the increase in wind velocity which occurs with the height. Sound is more often heard to the east in winter and to the west in summer, and other correlations with wind velocity and direction have been noted.

Another theory is that the effect is due to a rise in temperature in the upper stratosphere but there is no experimental evidence in its support. Sounding balloons have seldom risen above 20 miles (the record is 22 miles). They