

● RADIO

Saturday, May 26, 1951, 3:15-3:30 p.m. EDT

"Adventures in Science," with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Henry Field, Washington anthropologist who led the Peabody Museum-Harvard Expedition to the Near East last year, will discuss "The Search for Stone Age Cultures."

PSYCHIATRY

Now Tape Recorder Will "Count Your Sheep"

► A NEW kind of sheep counting to induce sleep, done by a tape recorder over a loudspeaker instead of by the sleepless person, was reported at the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Cincinnati.

Simple phrases are repeated over and over in a monotone. The phrases are chosen to induce sleep by suggestion, something like that used in hypnotism. The loudspeakers are in the wards of the hospital, while the recorder is in the nurse's office.

Within two to four weeks most patients reported gratifying results, Dr. Ernest Schmidhofer of Kennedy Hospital, Memphis, stated. Some were able to take daytime naps for the first time in their lives. Sleep became more quiet and refreshing. Patients dreamed less and had pleasant dreams instead of nightmares. Almost none except newly admitted patients asked for sleeping medicine.

The method can be used, Dr. Schmidhofer said, to give the benefits of restful sleep and relaxation to patients with all kinds of mental sickness, psychosomatic illness and pain of various kinds and duration.

Science News Letter, May 19, 1951

BOTANY

World's Tiniest Plant in Its Class Is Leafless Parasite

► THE TINIEST plant of its class in the world is now yielding up its life's secrets to scientists. It is a leafless parasite, a distant relative of mistletoe, and its small size is indicated by its name—*Arceuthobium minutissimum* Hook.f.

Found only in the high Himalayas, the plant often is less than a fifth of an inch in length. Its flowers are greenish in color. Scientists cannot yet tell whether the same individual is normally both male and female, as in most flowering plants. They will have to wait until the seeds are allowed to germinate on fresh and previously unattacked pine stems.

Dr. R. M. Datta of Jute Agricultural Research Institute, West Bengal, India, is investigating the characteristics of the tiny plant. He reported his observations in the journal, *NATURE* (Feb. 3).

Science News Letter, May 19, 1951

MEDICINE

Cortisone Hits Toxemia

Expectant mothers with dangerous toxemia helped by famous anti-arthritis remedy, results from treatment of eight pregnant women show.

► EXPECTANT MOTHERS who develop dangerous toxemia of pregnancy may be helped by the famous anti-arthritis remedy, cortisone, it appears from a report to the British Medical Association in London.

"It appears to be a help in the treatment," is the cautious wording of the doctors who tried it in eight cases at the National Maternity Hospital in Dublin.

All the patients were seriously ill, with high blood pressure, headaches and disturbed kidney function. Some had had convulsions. In all cases the patients improved considerably within a few days after the treatment was started.

Headache was relieved, the women no longer needed sedatives except occasionally at night. They felt better, ate better, their eyes improved. Dropsy swellings of ankles, feet, and the like were reduced, though some later developed dropsy of the abdomen, medically termed ascites. Kidney function improved, but blood pressure was not significantly affected.

OCEANOGRAPHY

Suggest Pink Icebergs

See Front Cover

► PINK ICEBERGS or orange icebergs, maybe even red or yellow bergs, will dot the North Atlantic if the suggestion of Dr. Irving I. Schell of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, Mass., is followed.

He told the American Geophysical Union meeting that spraying icebergs with color dust would make them much easier to spot and track, and would simplify counting them. Better prediction of the iceberg menace could probably be made if the number of icebergs and their movements in the Baffin Bay and Davis Strait areas were known more accurately.

The practical application of this plan was considered difficult by some of the scientists listening to Dr. Schell's proposal.

The iceberg pictured on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is one of the most unusual in shape and size sighted by the U. S. Coast Guard on International Ice Patrol duty.

Valuable information as to the circulation of water in the Baffin Bay and Davis Strait areas could also be gained from tracking the distinctively colored bergs, Dr. Schell said. Estimates could be made as to their course of travel, average speed and how long and how far they travel before disappearing.

Of the eight patients, one subsequently died of congestive heart failure. One developed the mental illness, schizophrenia, but had shown signs suggestive of this previously.

All but one of the mothers gave birth to live babies. In three cases, cortisone enabled the mothers to carry their babies enough longer so that the babies were born alive, though they were premature.

Important advantage of the cortisone treatment was that the mothers did not need so much sedative medicine to control their restlessness and reduce the risk of convulsions. Use of sedatives for this purpose, though otherwise necessary, carries a definite risk to the baby.

Doctors reporting the cases are: Henry Moore, W. J. E. Jessop, D. K. O'Donovan, A. P. Barry, Brigid Quinn and M. I. Drury. Details of the cases appear in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* (April 21).

Science News Letter, May 19, 1951

Most icebergs break off from the great glaciers of Western Greenland, slowly travel in the Labrador current to where it meets the Gulf Stream—fog-bound, offshore Newfoundland. Dr. Schell's idea is to mark them by color before they break off from the different glaciers. During the berg danger season, from April to July of each year, shipping of all nations, by international agreement, swings south from the northern, most direct great circle route to Europe.

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PHYSICS

Brookhaven Reactor's Face Unveiled to Public View

► THE NEW nuclear reactor, hot with fissioning atoms, at Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, L. I., can now be looked in the face without the viewer undergoing FBI clearance for character, associations and loyalty.

Most of the area around this new research tool is still highly classified, but scientists not cleared for secret work can conduct experiments with neutrons from the pile in the newly declassified area.

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