

## Do You Know?

*Cowbirds* lay their eggs in nests of other birds for hatching by them.

Among most *hoofed animals* the young are able to follow the parent within a few hours of birth.

What is commonly called the 17-year locust is actually the 17-year *cicada*, a close cousin of the dog-day cicada or harvest-fly.

World *population* has increased about 10% in the past decade.

A United States hatchery is shipping by plane about 1,000 baby *chicks* to Venezuela each week.

state of Massachusetts has come into the program.

But this is not just a program. It is not just a plan for meeting national disaster that may never come. It is vital action going on right now. Sick babies, old people, middle aged people in small towns are now being helped to health by gifts of blood from folks in other towns, large and small. Within three to five years, you and your neighbors, in cities or hamlets, will be giving and receiving blood for life and health.

*First of three articles on blood.*

Science News Letter, July 3, 1948

### VETERINARY MEDICINE

## New Disease Killing Dogs In U. S., Britain, Sweden

► DOGS in this country are suffering from a new and highly fatal disease, the American Veterinary Medical Association reported. Noticeable symptoms are fever, sore throat, coughing, loss of appetite, weakness and finally collapse and death. Sometimes there are also convulsions and other nervous manifestations. Postmortem examinations have shown severe damage to the liver.

Cause seems to be a virus, distinct from the virus that produces canine distemper. The disease seems to be identical with one that has killed 190 dogs in Sweden and "suggestively similar" to a malady that has caused the death of many dogs in Britain. Swedish veterinarians call it "hepatitis contagiosa canis."

Science News Letter, July 3, 1948

### ANTHROPOLOGY

## Geniuses' Lives Not Brief

Majority of acknowledged geniuses were not doomed to early deaths. In certain other traits, they conform to popular beliefs concerning them.

► GENIUSES don't die young, as a rule. Famous cases of brilliant lights snuffed out by early death, like those of Shelley, Keats, Schiller, Heine and Raphael, are exceptions, accounting for only one-half of one per cent of the world's acknowledged geniuses, declares Dr. R. E. G. Armattee, director of the Lomeshie Research Centre for Anthropology and Race Biology in Londonderry, Ireland.

Offsetting the early deaths of these young geniuses are the long lives of many other noted men, he points out. Classic instances are Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Corneille, Goethe and Newton; among the great who have died more recently at advanced ages were H. G. Wells and Max Planck. Still living, full of years and honors, are Shaw, Sibelius and Einstein.

Geniuses share the widespread but erroneous belief that their lives will be brief, Dr. Armattee found. Many of

them, convinced that they were doomed to die young, have labored with demonic energy, with the result that they produced their best work before 35.

Dr. Armattee was induced to make his study by a naturalist friend of his, who wanted to know why geniuses are short-lived. Four years of investigation, into the lives of 12,000 generally acknowledged geniuses, convinced him that the assumption was false.

Modern men who rate high in the arts and sciences have a life expectancy of 65 years, which is far greater than the average for geniuses of past generations.

In certain other traits, however, Dr. Armattee found geniuses to conform more closely to popular beliefs concerning them. Among these are a high degree of self-esteem, an infinite capacity for taking pains, and an indifference to the accepted code of sex morals.

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### ASTRONOMY

## Sun's Role in Cosmic Rays

► GIANT explosions associated with sunspots on the suns of the universe may be giving birth to the powerful cosmic rays which bombard our earth from outer space.

A natural atom-smasher, a kind of magnetic accelerator, is operating in the neighborhood of sunspots, Dr. Manuel Sandoval Vallarta of Mexico City suggested at a symposium on cosmic rays at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. Such an accelerator mechanism on our own sun may be producing a part of the cosmic radiation on the earth. Acceleration near sunspots on other stars might account for the rest of the cosmic rays, Dr. Vallarta pointed out.

This proposed solution for the mystery of the origin of the potent rays was presented to the National Academy of Sciences last year by Scott E. Forbush of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. He reported that Carnegie Institution records showed an increase in cosmic radiation at times of particularly high

activity on the sun. Dr. Vallarta has been working with Carnegie Institution scientists on a theory to explain how the suns of the universe could manufacture cosmic rays.

A new, yet-to-be-discovered cosmic ray particle was forecast at the symposium by a famous French scientist, Dr. Pierre Auger. Dr. Auger described the particle as a lightweight meson. It will have a weight of only three to ten times that of an electron, the tiny, negatively charged bit of atoms.

Known types of mesons, first found in cosmic rays and recently produced artificially for the first time at the University of California, have been assigned measured or estimated weights ranging from 200 to 900 times that of the electron.

The symposium, bringing together outstanding scientists from many countries, is being held in honor of 80-year old Dr. Robert Andrews Millikan, retired head of Cal Tech and a pioneer in the study of cosmic rays.

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