

OPHTHALMOLOGY

Sight Restored by Rays

► BETA RAYS from radium or radon are giving results "unobtainable by any other method" in restoring eyesight lost through scarring of the cornea, Dr. William H. Boyd of Los Angeles reported at the meeting of the American College of Surgeons.

The use of X-ray or radium treatment around the eye has been discouraged for years because of danger of cataract formation. This danger, Dr. Boyd finds, has been over-rated.

Patients whose eyesight improved under beta ray treatment were those whose corneas were scarred either through injury or

as a result of syphilis. Scarring of the cornea due to faulty nutrition was not much helped.

The cornea is the transparent outer covering in front of the eyeball. When it is scarred, light cannot get through and eyesight is impaired. Microscopic study of such scarred and thickened corneas showed that the layers of cells making up the cornea had increased in number and the cells had changed in shape. The ray treatment resulted in a decrease in numbers of cell layers and a tendency for the cells to flatten back to a shape resembling the original one.

Science News Letter, October 30, 1948

MEDICINE

Urge Early Child-Bearing

► SUBSIDIES to make early marriages possible for young people of superior intelligence and education, especially the young women, is the unique prescription for disease prevention offered by Dr. Joe Vincent Meigs of Boston, to the American College of Surgeons meeting in Los Angeles.

The particular disease to be prevented in this way is one peculiar to women. It is called endometriosis and is a condition in which the lining tissue of the uterus is found not only inside but outside the uterus and sometimes on nearby organs. Pain and menstrual disturbance are among the symptoms. The condition may lead to sterility either through its effects on child-bearing organs or through operations necessary to relieve it.

The disease appears at about the age of 26 years. It is so much less common among poor women who marry and bear children at an early age than among women of upper educational levels who postpone marriage and child-bearing that Dr. Meigs thinks the cause is the "non-interruption of menstrual periods from 14 to 26 when marriage and child-bearing does not occur."

Conservative methods which will some-

times relieve the pain and other disturbances should be tried in young women, Dr. Virgil S. Counsellor of the University of Minnesota urged. The more radical procedure of removing the uterus should be reserved for women in their middle-thirties so far as possible.

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ENGINEERING

Small House Costs Cut by Improved Building Methods

► TEN PERCENT saving in the cost of construction of small houses designed with non-load-bearing partitions is possible, it has been proven by the Small Homes Council at the University of Illinois. Improved construction methods are the answer.

In a year-long research project, six houses were built, identical in size and arrangement. In their construction, the industry-engineered house plan developed by the Producers' Council and the National Retail Lumber Dealers Association was used. The project was a cooperative

effort of the University of Illinois and the U. S. Department of Commerce. The Producers' Council, a group of manufacturers of building materials, acted as technical advisers.

In this cost-saving construction, the house is erected as a single large room, in which partitions that bear no weight but their own are later installed. Floors and ceiling are completed before the partitions are put in place. The roof is carried by trusses, constructed on the ground in the form of triangular frames, and lifted into place as completed units.

Both exterior and interior walls are put together as complete units while flat on the floor, and then raised into position. Floors are laid, interior finish is applied on ceilings and walls, and plumbing is put into place before the interior partitions are erected. Building materials are pre-cut to dimension by powered machines before being assembled on the job.

Details of the new ideas utilized in these homes are presented by the Small Homes Council at the University in a non-technical, illustrated, 12-page circular titled CONSTRUCTION METHODS which can be obtained on request. A technical report is available also from the Council for \$2.50.

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