

PSYCHOLOGY—BIOLOGY—HISTORY

I.Q. Is What Surroundings And Experience Make It

Scientists Also Learn That Wheat Offspring Can Be Predicted and Made to Order; War Gas for Insects

A CHILD of average intelligence today may grow up to be a genius or feeble minded, Prof. Beth L. Wellman of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station told the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

She finds a child's mental future depends upon his environment.

An entire revision of previous concepts of intelligence to conform with newly discovered facts is demanded by Prof. Wellman. Your IQ is not a fixed incapable fact with which you come into the world. It can be increased or decreased according to your surroundings.

"An individual who functions at a high level is one who keeps himself in trim by exercise and training in mental areas," said Prof. Wellman.

The mental surroundings of a child should be favorable for intellectual growth, she said, and his environment must change progressively as he grows older in order to be as stimulating to him mentally at one age as another.

Scientists of the future may look upon the human race of today as intellectually undernourished, Prof. Wellman prophesied. She sees no reason for not encouraging extreme upward changes in the intelligence of children.

"They are beneficial to the child and to society," she said.

Man was just as easy to fool some

five hundred years ago as he is now, Dr. George Sarton, editor of *Isis* and historian of science, has concluded from a study of "most popular authors" and "best sellers" among earliest printed books, incunabula or books printed before 1501.

The great majority of contemporary authors whose writings were printed in those days were unknown and mediocre, Dr. Sarton told the History of Science Society.

The history of the transmission of knowledge is just as important as the history of its discovery, Dr. Sarton declared. For this reason, conducting his researches as a Carnegie Institution associate in the Harvard Library, he is now giving special attention to the critical period in the diffusion of knowledge that was ushered in by the invention of printing.

War Against Insects

Chemical science has equipped man with a new weapon for use in his unending war of defense against insect hordes, Dr. Harold H. Shepard and Frank W. Fisk of the Minnesota University Farm, St. Paul, announced to the A.A.A.S.

The name of the compound is methyl bromide. It combines bromine, one of the earlier-tries of the war gases, with the radicle that makes wood alcohol the unsafe stuff it is for internal application.

● RADIO

January 20, 4:00 p. m., E.S.T.
HOW SAFE ARE YOUNG DRIVERS?—Dr. Harry M. Johnson, Highway Research Board.

January 27, 4:00 p. m., E.S.T.
WHAT'S NEW IN CHEMISTRY—Dr. Harrison E. Howe, editor of *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*.

In the Science Service series of radio discussions led by Watson Davis, Director, over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Methyl bromide seems to be good for use against insect pests on a number of fronts. It can be used for seed disinfection, for it kills the bugs and does not harm the seed. It can be used for various kinds of fumigation, with effects comparable to those of hydrocyanic acid, yet it does not linger on, even as a bad smell. The presence of moisture seems to make it more effective.

Wheat Made to Order

Human parents would be highly pleased if they could tell ahead of time what their expected offspring was going to look like, or even whether it was to be boy or girl.

Plant breeders have them beaten four ways from the ace. Dr. Fred N. Briggs of the University of California told scientists that in 1939 a new variety of wheat will be born at the University experimental grounds at Davis, Calif. It should be in commercial production by 1943.

The new variety will be resistant to stem rust, smut, and Hessian fly. In addition, Dr. Briggs said, he and his colleagues know just what it will look like, how it will yield, where it will be adapted to grow, and how it will mill.

Now all they need to do is go ahead and combine, by the back-crossing method, the parent stocks possessing the qualities they want to produce.

They know they can do it, for they have already made other strains to order in the same way. They have produced three varieties resistant to smut and are now in process of producing seven more. Two varieties have been produced that are resistant to both stem rust and smut, and rust resistance is being added to two others.

Science News Letter, January 15, 1938

There are 19 million acres of land under irrigation in the West.

The British Columbia plover spends its winters in Hawaii, after flying 3,000 miles over the Pacific.

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