



#### IN THE ROYAL CITADEL

*A greatly enlarged model of a small section of a tropical termite "city" has been placed on display at the Buffalo Museum of Science. Interest centers in the royal chamber, where the enormous-bodied queen and her mate are attended by workers. An immature winged form is seen near upper left, and at lower right is a fully mature winged insect ready for its nuptial flight.*

water, appears to be more than possible, for the Yellow River is connected with the Yangtze through the Hwei River and the famous Grand Canal. The streams which connect the Yellow and the Hwei already flow downward from the Yellow to the Hwei.

Some idea of the vast amount of mud carried by the flood may be gained from the fact that Shantung province, now a peninsula, was once an island. The silt delta connecting the mainland and Shantung is the world's largest delta, measuring 400 miles on a side. It has been laid down by the Yellow River through the ages.

Bruised by war and battered by flood, stricken China now appears to have two new tragic trials in store for her.

The worst famine in the Far Eastern land's many centuries of periodic mass hunger and one of the worst epidemics of disease in the annals of mankind seem now to be inescapable as a result of the flood of China's Sorrow, the mighty Yellow River.

The flood of the great Hwang Ho, whether man-made or brought on by natural causes or both, is not going to recede at any time soon. It is going to get worse. Pouring into the great plain of the provinces of Honan and Shantung on the heels of the torrential rains

will be the "spring melt" from the mountains of far-off Tibet, the Yellow River's source. This peak may be expected about mid-July.

Two factors, flood and war, make the situation more serious than ever before. Cutting wide swaths through fertile farmlands as much as 30 feet below the bed of the river, the Hwang Ho is adding indescribable destruction of crops in China's granary to the extreme dislocation caused by the war waged in that region.

To the millions already made homeless by the war are being added the millions now homeless as a result of the flood. When the defeated, but not conquered, Chinese armies retreated westward, with them went uncounted millions of civilians fleeing the Japanese. Their care and, particularly, their feeding became a burden thrust upon Honan and Shantung, already burdened by having to support upwards of a million men under arms.

To this already acute food problem is added the problem of feeding those who can look forward now to nothing but a harvest of muddy water from their rice paddies and grain fields. And, it must be remembered, even in the best times, food is scanty enough in China.

It is on these facts that the expecta-

tion of a devastating famine is based. That famine will strike a population, a large portion of which are already weakened in their resistance to disease through China's semi-permanent state of mass malnutrition and as a result of the protracted war. The epidemic of disease, which may be cholera or typhus or both with dietary diseases as complication, is predicted upon the basis of the regularity with which disease follows flood and famine, particularly in a land where sanitary conditions are poor.

Reports from China during the past few months have persistently reported that Chinese refugees and soldiers alike are badly infested with typhus-carrying lice. An epidemic of typhus of major proportions is already regarded as long overdue. That such an epidemic will not take hold and spread with terrible rapidity in the severe conditions attending the flood—hunger and overcrowding among refugees of both the war and the waters—appears to be something not even the world's most enthusiastic optimist could hope.

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#### PHYSIOLOGY

### Nerve Unbalance Declared Essential Cause of Old Age

**O**LD AGE was explained in terms of lack of balance between two sets of nerves in a report by Dr. David R. Higbee of San Diego, Calif.

The balance is between the sympathetic and the parasympathetic divisions of the autonomic nervous system. This system regulates the action of the ductless glands, the blood vessels and the internal organs.

The systematic division of this nervous system, Dr. Higbee explained, is not essential to life and is functionally active under emotional, physical and biochemical crises. The parasympathetic division is "the very essence of life," he declared. It functions constantly, building up reserves in the body and carrying out the coordinated adjustments of internal organs.

These two divisions of the autonomic nervous systems are antagonistic. The healthy state of every tissue depends on a balance between them which is normally maintained.

"Old age," Dr. Higbee said, "is the expression of the permanent disintegration of this balance."

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There is some reason to think the Assyrians played the bagpipe.