



#### BALLOON SHOWS BEHAVIOR OF STAR

*Dr. W. S. Adams, director of the Mt. Wilson Observatory is here shown with one of the exhibits of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. The expanding balloon represents a Cepheid variable type of star as it pulsates. The balloon changes colors to correspond with changes in stellar temperature.*

crease over the last two years, although it is likely that at least 9,500 cases of this loathsome disease will have been recorded in this country before 1939 has ended. As usual, the States chiefly responsible for this disgraceful record are those in the North Central and Western sections of the country where compulsory vaccination is not generally accepted as a preventive of the disease.

I wish it were possible to report similarly gratifying progress in the control of those chronic affections resulting from the degenerative processes associated with advancing age. Reports for the current year afford no indication that we have made any progress toward checking the mortality from these conditions. In fact, such diseases as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and cerebral hemorrhage were all responsible for still higher death tolls than they exacted during the previous year. However, little success could have been expected in this direction since we have really not yet awakened to the need and feasibility of combating these leaders among the causes of death.

However, our greatest disappointment lies in our failure to duplicate the gains of last year against motor vehicle accidents. Apparently, the gains registered in this direction during the earlier part of the year have been dissipated in the closing months. The remarkably fine weather this autumn has been conducive to increased motoring, with its accom-

panying grist of fatal accidents. Unless a radical change for the better occurs in the next few weeks, which seems unlikely, the number of automobile deaths this year will exceed those reported in 1938 and may run as high as 33,000.

As to the prospects for the coming year, it is perhaps too much to expect a continuation of the exceptionally favorable conditions that have prevailed during the last two years. Nevertheless, at the present writing, there is nothing that would lead one to expect otherwise. We cannot, of course, anticipate the so-called "acts of God" such as earthquakes, tidal-waves, hurricanes, etc., nor can we foresee very far in advance such visitations as the great pandemic of influenza which overwhelmed the country in the fall of 1918.

Great wars often breed widespread epidemics of diseases which ordinarily are kept under control and for that reason it is possible that we may have to cope with such an aftermath of the present deplorable situation in Europe. But this danger will be greatly mitigated if we persist in our determination not to be drawn into the conflict.

Barring such contingencies, there is every reason to believe that 1940 will be another year of good health for the American people. For one thing, there never has been a time when the people as a whole and as individuals were so health conscious as at present. More and

## RADIO

W. H. Cameron, of the National Safety Council will tell how you can help reduce accidents as guest scientist on "Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the coast to coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Thursday, January 11, 4:15 p.m., EST, 3:15 CST, 2:15 MST, 1:15 PST. Watson Davis will forecast 1940's science progress on January 4, 4:15 p.m. EST. Listen in on your local station. Listen in each Thursday.

more they are coming to realize the important place that good health has in our national economy.

Accordingly, they are demanding that the very best in the way of medical care be available to every element of the population regardless of social or economic status, whether in the remote rural sections of the country or in the large urban centers. When millions of individuals become intelligently interested in their personal health it constitutes a tremendous cooperative force that is bound to advance public welfare generally.

Already this public interest in health has begun to work wonders. It has freed us from the old taboo against the word "syphilis" so that now we are at last launched on a nationwide campaign which promises to minimize this scourge to our people.

It has brought about a unanimity of opinion among the medical profession, public health authorities, social workers and government officials concerning the necessity of drastic revision of our public health structure which seemed hopeless only a few years ago. True, there is still some divergence of opinion as to how this revision shall be brought about but there is little doubt that these differences will be adjusted satisfactorily in the near future. A National Health Law will probably be passed by Congress at its coming session and while the effects of this program are not likely to be felt immediately it is sure to benefit the health of the nation in the years to come.

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