

WHAT IS RACE?: Evidence From Scientists—Diana Tead—*UNESCO (Columbia University Press)*, 87 p., illus., paper, \$1.00. With ingenious diagrams and simple text, this booklet tells the story of human genetics and race. It is intended to give facts which will dispel blind race prejudice, but parts of the book are likely to lead to controversy and may offend the very readers the booklet is intended to influence.

THE WHOOPING CRANE—Robert Porter Allen—*National Audubon Society*, 246 p., illus., paper, \$3.00. The author literally lived with the cranes to collect the information here reported on their habits. "A whooping crane flock in migration," he says, "must be classed with the Grand Canyon and Yosemite among the Great Natural Wonders of North America."

WORKING WIVES AND MOTHERS—Stella B. Applebaum—*Public Affairs Committee*, 32 p., illus., paper, 25 cents. To help solve the modern wife's problem—to work or not to work, and giving suggestions on managing both household and job.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1952

DENTISTRY

Cleft Palate Problem

► **THE CHILD** with a cleft palate needs help as much as the child crippled by polio or disabled by any other cause, in the opinion of Dr. P. C. Lowery, dental surgeon in Detroit and president of the Pierre Fauchard Academy.

He calls for a central research unit in the U. S. Public Health Service to be devoted to this problem.

The cleft palate population is estimated at 200,000 with 4,600 new cases each year. Cleft palate is a condition in which the palate, or roof of the mouth, does not close through the center before the baby is born. As a result, the child born with this condition has trouble in chewing, swallowing and talking. Freak tooth arrangement may also result.

Surgical operations to correct the condition are not always successful, in Dr. Lowery's opinion. Patients may need to be fitted with an artificial palate. Dentists, he believes, can, from their experience in making false teeth, do much to aid the cleft palate victim.

In a report to *Dental Survey* (Dec.), he says a central research unit on cleft palates would have the following advantages: 1. a post-graduate school for cleft palate prosthesis; 2. improved efficiency and economy; 3. opportunity for the dentist to pool his skill with the plastic and maxillofacial surgeon, the sculptor, the artist, the engineer, the speech and voice instructor for re-education and correction; 4. the merging of inter-professional principles; 5. establishment of a special group to inquire and disseminate knowledge of a specific nature concerning a problem which dentists have been interested in and have contributed to for many years; 6. the complete rehabilitation of valuable and useful citizens.

BIOCHEMISTRY

Examine Catalase Role

► **A CLUE** to the mystery of the functioning of catalase, one of the important enzymes in plants and animals, has been suggested by a University of California at Los Angeles plant nutritionist.

Dr. David Appleman says that catalase may be a factor in the synthesis of two of the most prominent protein pigments in life processes—chlorophyll and hemoglobin.

"It seems significant that practically all catalase activity in the green plant cell and in the blood is localized in the chloroplast and the red blood cell, respectively," Dr. Appleman says. Chloroplasts are the center of chlorophyll synthesis, and hemoglobin is a major component of the red blood cell.

Dr. Appleman's research has revealed that when rapid chlorophyll synthesis takes place in the green plant cell, catalase activity decreases, and that when chlorophyll synthesis is blocked, catalase activity rises rapidly.

It has also been observed that catalase activity in livers of rats was decreased by pregnancy or a growing tumor, and that anemia often accompanied these conditions.

"Just what role the enzyme plays in the synthesis of the two major pigments of protoplasm is not yet known," Dr. Appleman says. "But the enzyme appears to bear a significant relationship to the green pigment which is so vital in energy-producing processes, and the red pigment so important to utilization of energy by animals."

Science News Letter, December 6, 1952

Engineers can reduce the hazard of *coal-dust explosions* from 70% to 90% in some mines by drilling holes in the coal beds and forcing water through the holes several days before the beds are mined.

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BIOCHEMISTRY

Drug Starts Gland Chain Reaction

► **A DRUG** which starts one of the body's gland chain reactions has been found. The drug is neostigmine, used in some disorders of muscles and nerves, such as myasthenia gravis.

It apparently stimulates the pituitary gland to cause a release of the female sex hormone from the ovaries, Dr. C. Frederic Fluhmann of Stanford University School of Medicine reported to the Pacific Coast Obstetrical and Gynecological Society.

His findings were made in experiments with immature female rats. He thinks, although further study is needed to be sure, that this same drug may also stimulate release of other hormones by other of the body's glands.

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