

# SCIENCE

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## THE PHYSIOLOGIC LIFE<sup>1</sup>

### CONTENTS

<i>The Physiologic Life</i> : PROFESSOR A. J. CARLSON .....	355
<i>A Revision of the Fundamental Law of Habit Formation</i> : PROFESSOR KNIGHT DUNLAP .....	360
<i>Henri Bosmans</i> : PROFESSOR FLORIAN CAJORI .....	362
<i>Scientific Events</i> :	
<i>International Society for the Exploration of the Arctic Regions by Means of the Airship; The Reorganization of the Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital; The St. Louis Meeting of the American Chemical Society; The Milton Research Awards of Harvard University</i> .....	363
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i> .....	365
<i>University and Educational Notes</i> .....	369
<i>Discussion and Correspondence</i> :	
<i>A Periodic Classification of the Hardness and Melting-points of the Elements</i> : DR. S. A. KORFF. <i>Further Evidence concerning Man's Antiquity in Oklahoma</i> : HAROLD J. COOK. <i>The Geology of Sonora</i> : DR. GRAHAM JOHN MITCHELL. <i>Threatened Extinction of the Ruffed Grouse</i> : BIRGER R. HEADSTROM. <i>What is a Name?</i> : PROFESSOR WM. T. M. FORBES .....	370
<i>Scientific Books</i> :	
<i>West's Treatise on the British Freshwater Algae</i> : PROFESSOR CHARLES A. KOFOD. <i>Fischer's Gewebzellen</i> : ALBERT H. EBELING .....	373
<i>Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods</i> :	
<i>Method for Demonstrating the Diffusion of Oxygen through Rubber</i> : SAMUEL E. HILL .....	374
<i>Special Articles</i> :	
<i>The Production of Mutations and Rearrangements of Genes by X-Rays</i> : DR. ALEXANDER WEINSTEIN. <i>A Determination of the Newtonian Constant of Gravitation by a Study of the Vibrations of a Torsion Pendulum</i> : T. E. STERN .....	376
<i>Science News</i> .....	x

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WE know to-day many factors that injure the individual, and a few that seem to injure the race. But in our almost complete ignorance of the mechanisms of race improvement, we seem impotent on the positive side, except that by eliminating those who deviate markedly from the average we may give the latter group more elbow room. By selection and controlled breeding we seem to be able to secure a fatter hog and a faster horse. Have we thereby secured a better hog and a better horse?

Assuming that we know how to achieve fundamental race improvement, is there any agreement as to the goal? Is the super model of *homo sapiens* to be constructed on the line of a Mussolini, a Gandhi, an Einstein, a Dempsey, a Darwin or a Henry Ford? Is he to be "wet" or "dry"? Should he be white, black, yellow, brown, pink or gray? Should he be six or sixty feet tall? Should he be a more rational or a more emotional machine? Is he to be a pacifist or a man fitted to wage bigger and better wars? Are we to aim at a better coordinated society of masters and slaves or a democracy?

The present state of development of man and his fellow animals has come about through the forces of heredity and environment, practically without an iota of conscious direction based on accumulated experience. The time during which we have had even an approximate understanding of our physiological processes, and the factors that favor or impede the same, is so short that it may virtually be ignored in the total time span that man and other animals have existed upon the earth. If we knew what our forebears ate and drank (and how much); if we knew how they worked, rested, loved, we could with greater certainty put the labels "favorable" and "unfavorable" on the manner of living and on the man-made environment of to-day.

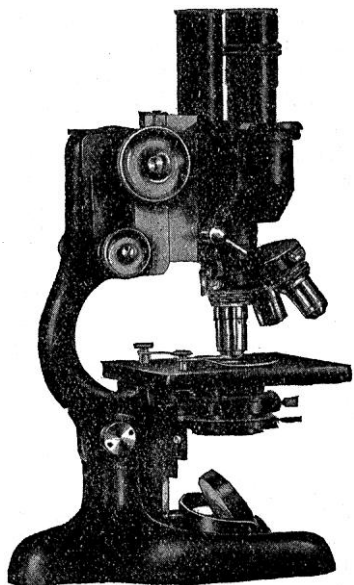
We may assume that the present man is the best possible product of past conditions. In what respects do conditions of human life to-day differ from those of yesterday, and do any of the new conditions bode ill for to-morrow?

1. Modern man cooks, preserves, sterilizes and denatures his food to a greater extent than his forebears.
2. Modern man lives under more uniform climatic

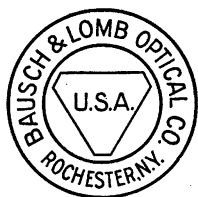
<sup>1</sup> Address given at the third Race Betterment Conference, Battle Creek, Michigan, January, 1928.

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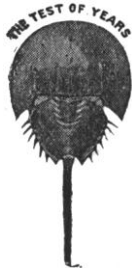
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