of cysteine would be completely oxidized only after a period of about 7 days) but if the cysteine were completely metal-free the oxygen consumption would undoubtedly be still less. The oxidation which has been observed by Gerwe can not be called autoxidation until the presence of other metals such as copper and manganese has been studied.

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SPECIAL ARTICLES

A NEW MUTATION IN THE HOUSE MOUSE (MUS MUSCULUS)

IN the fall of 1926 a female mouse of unusual color, caught in the country several miles from the nearest town, was brought to our laboratory. The eyes were pink, indistinguishable from the eyes of the common pink-eyed varieties but the coat color, though plainly agouti, was lighter than that of a pink-eyed black agouti.

A mating of this animal with a pink-eyed brown non-agouti produced young phenotypically like the ordinary wild. This result indicated that this new mutation was different from the common pink-eyed form. Further matings of the F_1's produced dark and pink-eyed agoutis, blacks, browns and the new mutation. This new mutation which is tentatively called p_2 is not in the pink-eye (P, p), color (C, c^{ch}, c^d, c), or dilution (D, d) series.

The new p_2 gene seems to dilute both the yellow and black or brown in agouti individuals. So far a non-agouti in the new mutation has not been found. The combination of the new pink-eye gene and extreme dilution $c^dc^dp_2p_2$ produces an animal with very little color and eliminates pigment from the ears. A complete report of the inheritance of this new character together with linkage studies will be published later.

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"AT THE TOP IS MAGIC"

IT is sometimes difficult to understand how certain books can get published, especially by reputable publishers. Many readers of SCIENCE will doubtless raise that question if they dip into "The Adventure of Mankind," translated by Robert Bek-Gran from the original German of Eugen Georg.[1] The "blurb" on the jacket states that "to read it thoughtfully and to weigh its challenges should become the pleasure as well as the duty of all enlightened Americans."

Thumbing its pages as a botanist, though possibly not as an enlightened American, and more in pursuit of the promised pleasure than from a sense of duty, we read as follows:

> The poplar tree fell ill throughout all of Middle Germany. None of the trees were raised from seed, but were slips from a single mother tree; that is, they were a single individual distributed along a thousand highways. Suddenly these shoots perished, because the life energy of the mother plant (in the park of Wörlitz) became exhausted. Similarly the La France rose has languished, the blood-beeches have become decrepit, Malvasier grapes and Borsdorfer apples have turned sterile, and certain varieties of potato have disappeared, whenever they have been raised from shoots rather than, as formerly, from seeds of their kind. All these descendants, these grandchildren, these daughter cultures are but segments of a super-individual unity. When the root dies, they die (p. 234).

In other words if Ephraim Bull's original Concord grape-vine, at Concord, Massachusetts, should suffer from mildew all the other Concord grape-vines in the country, being descended from the Concord vine by cuttings, would also suffer from mildew; if the Concord grape should die that would be the end of all the Concord grapes in the world! This, we are told, is owing to the fact that there is a "rhythm of all living substances," "a magic bond which thus disregards space and time to unite the parent of a race, a family, a species with his heirs. Sometimes the links are so strong that the offspring perishes with the parent, the branch with the root, the daughter with the mother—be it plant, nation or civilization." A terrible thought for daughters!

What a pity that the French physiologist, Leo Erera, whose researches illuminated the subject of "physiological action at a distance," was not possessed of these data!

On page 246 we learn that, "The influence of the moon reaches the elemental depths of our animal and plant world," so that "The sap of trees rises and falls with the phases of the moon. If the walla tree of East Africa is felled at the time of the new moon, it produces splendid building material. Cut down at the full, it has no durability at all. Plants sown under the waxing moon are strongly rooted, but those set under its wane turn mostly to leaf; hence the first phases of the moon insure the best harvest."

This passage should insure a good sale of the book in Vermont, so that those engaged in the maple sugar industry will not fall into the error of tapping their trees at the wrong phase of the moon.

In the discussion of sunspots (p. 247) we note

[1] Putnam's, September 28, 1931.

that "The season of leafage or blossoming depends on them." This shatters the principle of photoperiodism, and incidentally ruins the reputation of the U. S. Bureau of Plant Industry for publishing reliable work.

The statements that "Matter is apparently formed by a kind of negative atmospheric pressure," and that "An atom of matter is nothing but a kind of emptiness in space" (p. 282) set us to wondering whether ideas are sometimes emptiness, formed by a negative process, but this reverie was interrupted as our eyes caught the following on page 293: "Yes, there is a scale of scientific knowledge. And at its bottom we find the so-called 'exact' sciences. Further up are the occult sciences—paraphysics and parapsychology. At the top is magic!"

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

MAYAN SYMPOSIA AND EXHIBITS AT NEW ORLEANS

THREE sections of the American Association are planning symposia dealing with various phases of the civilization indicated by the Mayan ruins. On Tuesday afternoon Sections H, K and L will join for symposia on "Commerce, Trade and Monetary Units of the Mayas" and "Social and Economic Institutions of the Mayas." This program is in charge of Dr. Joseph Mayer, secretary of Section L of the association. Dr. Mayer is working in cooperation with Professor Frans Blom, director of the School of Middle American Research at Tulane, and with the officers of Section H.

At a dinner meeting on Tuesday evening the retiring vice-president of Section H, Dr. Carl E. Guthe, will deliver his address on the subject, "The Maya Lunar Count."

The opportunity which these meetings will afford for becoming familiar at first hand with the important work being done by the Department of Middle American Research of Tulane University is in itself a special attraction of the New Orleans meeting. In this connection the following information, supplied by Director Frans Blom, is particularly interesting:

In the latter part of 1924 a citizen of New Orleans created the Department of Middle American Research, with an endowment of $300,000 and the purchase of the William E. Gates Library, containing about 3,500 books, pamphlets and autographs pertaining to the ancient and modern history of Mexico. Mr. Gates was appointed the first director of the new department and functioned as such until the first month of 1926.

The aim of the department is to conduct research in Middle America (*i.e.*, Mexico), the Central American Republics and the West Indies, covering the ancient, the colonial and the modern history of these countries, their geography, botany, ethnology, etc., and to form a library which it is hoped will eventually be one of the most complete and comprehensive on this subject in the United States.

In 1925 the First Tulane University Expedition departed from Vera Cruz, Mexico, and during six months conducted investigations, chiefly of an archeological and ethnological nature, in the southern states of Mexico and part of Guatemala. The results of this expedition were published in a two-volume report entitled "Tribes and Temples." During the same year an agronomical investigation was made in the State of Tabasco, Mexico, and the part of this survey which related to the possibilities of growing rubber was published in the U. S. Government report entitled: "Possibilities for Para Rubber Production in Northern Tropical America," U. S. Department of Commerce, 1926.

The library was augmented with the purchase of the George H. Pepper library.

After Mr. William E. Gates' departure, Mr. Frans Blom was appointed acting director, with Mr. Oliver La Farge II as his assistant. Later, Professor Hermann Beyer joined the permanent staff. Professor Rudolph Schuller conducted some temporary work, and from him a fine collection of pamphlets was purchased.

In 1927 the Third Tulane University Expedition, headed by Mr. La Farge, and with Mr. Douglas Byers as assistant, spent several months in the highlands of Guatemala, investigating the Indian population of the town of Jacaltenango.

During the same year the Sedly Mackie Library was purchased, and through this purchase the department's library with one stroke attained an important position. The Gates Library contained some fine manuscripts and linguistic material; the Pepper Library added much valuable pamphlet material, specially of a more general nature; and the Schuller collection, made in distant parts of Central America, contributed many rare imprints. Finally the Mackie library presented a most astoundingly complete gathering of the classics of Middle American Research, with an abundance of rare items.

It was evident that the limited funds of the department would not permit the purchase of museum specimens, the financing of expeditions and the upkeep of a library at the same time, and as it is just as evident that the library is the foundation for sound research,