

increasing values as the deposit is approached. From a study of the relative distribution of the various types of hydrocarbons present, it is possible to predict whether the accumulation will consist of gas or oil."

This method has already assisted in the discovery of several new oil and gas fields and has aided in determining the probable limits of production in other newly discovered fields.—JAMES STOKLEY.

### ITEMS

STUDY of the inheritance of physical defects and tendency to diseases in human beings will be undertaken at the University of Michigan, as the result of the establishment of a department of human heredity in the laboratory of vertebrate genetics, and of a heredity clinic to be housed in the hospital of the university. The new department and clinic will be closely associated with the medical school. Although one or two clinics of this kind have been established in Europe, none has hitherto been established in this country. Among the subjects selected for special attention are hereditary dental abnormalities, body proportions and growth, speech defects and deafness.

A GREAT iron meteorite weighing nearly a ton, found by a plowboy in a Georgia field, has been brought to the Smithsonian Institution for study and display in the U. S. National Museum. It is the second largest object of its kind ever found east of the Mississippi. The meteorite, which was buried about two feet deep in the red soil of a cotton field, was struck by the blade of the plow. Since

the soil of this particular part of Georgia is almost entirely free from rocks, the boy's curiosity led him to dig down to the obstruction. He managed to break off a small piece, which was eventually sent to the Smithsonian Institution for identification. A visit to the locality by E. P. Henderson, of the staff, and C. W. Cooke, of the U. S. Geological Survey, followed, and arrangements were made for the transfer of the meteorite to Washington.

DESTRUCTION, scattering and isolation, brought by war to the principal scientific collections of the Old World, enhance the importance of similar collections in American museums and universities. The 17 million specimens in the natural history collections of the Smithsonian Institution, comprising everything from pressed wildflowers to human skulls, take on increased significance as scholars become unable to travel abroad in normal fashion. When a new species of plant or animal is discovered, a representative specimen is deposited—usually the first specimen collected—in one of the larger museums. This is known as the type specimen. It is used for comparison with other specimens collected later, to make absolutely certain of their identity. Many of the type specimens in Old World collections have already been destroyed; others have been removed and hidden in safe places. But even where they have thus escaped destruction, they are not at present available for study. Furthermore, practically all important collections in continental Europe are out of reach of Americans and British, as the collections in Britain and America are unavailable to continental scholars.

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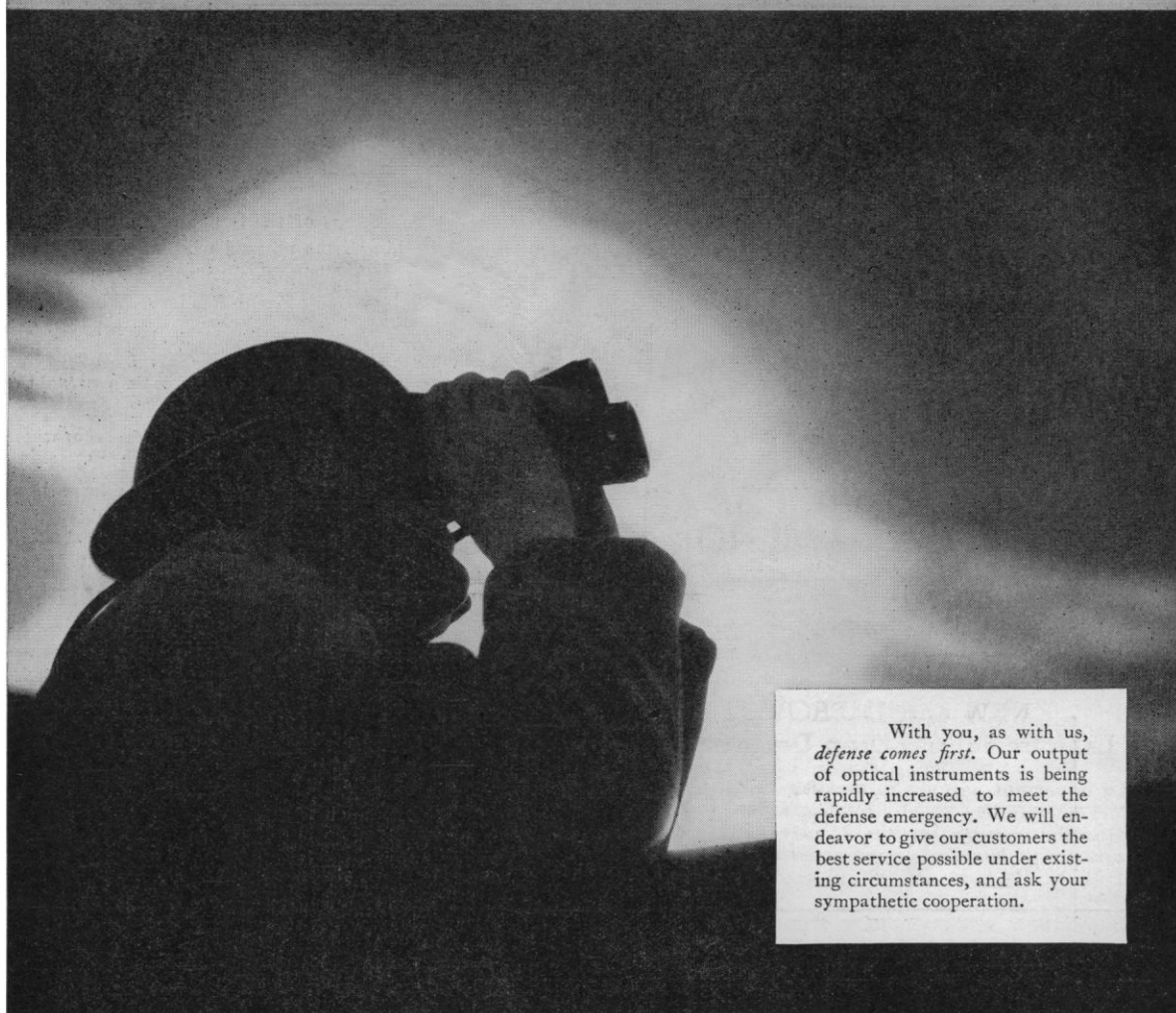
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