sacral area of both the male and the female at the age of three months. This was suspected of being a so-called "Mongoloid spot," already fading out.

There were only a few days available before I had to leave and I was able to examine fifty new-born Bengali babies at the Lady Dufferin Victoria Hospital in Calcutta, as well as eight infants from other provinces. In this small sample of bluish-grey irregular pigmented patch on the sacro-coccygeal and gluteal regions was observed in 38 and absent in 12 of the 50 Bengalis. The pigmented spot varied from a small patch 1 to 3 inches in diameter over the sacrum, or to one side, to a large irregular discoloration over the whole area, or one patch over the sacrum and another over one or both buttocks. These children belonged chiefly to Bengali Brahmin, Kayastha and Muslim communities; a few were classified by caste as shown in Table I.

TABLE I

SACRAL SPOT IN 16 BENGALI BABIES BY CASTE

| Caste | No. | Spot present | Spot absent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bania | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Brahmin* | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Goldsmith | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Kayastha* | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Tatti (weaver) | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Vaidya* | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Muslim | 2 | 2 | 0 |

* High-caste Hindus.

The spot was familiar to the Indian nurses, and it is called "jot" (spot) in Bengali. One nurse from the Himalayan region said, "We call it the sign of a Hill baby," the Hill people being, of course, the Mongoloid Nepalese and Tibetans.

In answer to my inquiry Mr. S. S. Sarkar, of the Bose Institute, wrote, "Mongolian spots are quite common in Bengali children. They can be observed up to a certain time after birth when the skin is a bit lighter, but with age the skin gets darker and the spots can not be distinguished. Instances of its persistence up to a fairly adult age are, however, known. . . . I have seen it in German babies in Berlin."

On the way home I was able to visit the maternity ward of the General Hospital of Batavia, Java. The doctor in charge kindly allowed me to examine all the newborn babies. He said that the Mongoloid spot was such a universal feature of the natives that it is taken for granted. He also reported that it is absent in the Dutch infants and also in the Indonesian × Dutch hybrids. There were well-marked spots, similar to those observed in Calcutta, in 15 Javanese babies examined and no spot on the one Dutch and one Eurasian baby present. The Javanese belong to the Malayan branch of the Mongoloid race.

Even though the sacral spot may be a recessive character, it evidently segregates out in later generations from racial crossings; Mr. Sarkar saw it in Prussian babies and it has been reported in Hungarians and Roumanians[1]; all these European stocks contain a Mongoloid Slavic strain. In India, it is my impression that the sacral spot is rare among Anglo-Indians (as the Eurasians are called). It was absent in six Anglo-Indian babies examined last summer in Calcutta. Its occurrence in Hawaiians, Portuguese and Whites in Hawaii has been recorded by Larsen and Godfrey,[2] who also found that it segregated out in the descendants of crossings between these races in ratios that fitted a two-factor theory of inheritance for the spot, involving a dominant gene for pigment and a recessive determiner. They concluded that it is probably a universal human character, not a racial one, and that it is vestigial or rudimentary in Western Europeans.

The sacral spot has been reported in 3.78 per cent. among 11,784 babies in Turkey, mostly Turks.[3] In India, besides the Sindi twins, the spot was observed in a native of Goa from western India; in a Punjabi Sikh baby and a Muslim from the United Provinces. A Christian missionary nurse told me, in 1941, that she had seen the spot on babies of converts from various Hindu lower-castes at Gorapur, United Provinces. In a Madrasi Tamil baby examined it was absent.

It therefore seems that the sacral spot is fairly wide-spread in northern and eastern India. There is a Mongoloid aboriginal strain in Bengal and Behar, and observations on this character in Mundas, Santals and other tribes would be of interest. There were no doubt Mongoloids in the forces of the Afghans and Moghuls who long ruled northern India and Bengal.

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## CREDIDMUS JOVEM REGNARE

PROFESSOR RITTER'S recent article on Darwin[1] brings up a question on which there has been much discussion, some of it in the nature of a lament for a view of nature which has passed. Aside from the matter of the scientific method involved, there is the point which seldom receives much consideration from biologists, and that is Darwin's recognition that, as one consequence of his hypothesis, the field of ethics must receive some attention. But if the vision of the author of Ecclesiastes was truly prophetic, we should

[1] E. Baur, E. Fischer and F. Lenz, "Human Heredity." London, 1931.

[2] N. P. Larsen and L. S. Godfrey, *Am. Jour. Phys. Anthrop.*, 10: 253–274. 1927.

[3] Henry Field, *Am. Jour. Phys. Anthrop.*, 27: 119–126. 1940.

[1] SCIENCE, 95: 58, 1942.

find some other similar episode in human history. One such is to be found among the ancient Greeks, and, as in the present episode, science was held blameworthy. Perhaps the antiquity of the episode is sufficient to enable us to view it impersonally and objectively in the present.

Burnet[2] remarks: "My aim has been to show that a new thing came into the world with the early Ionian teachers—the thing we call science—and that they first pointed the way which Europe has followed ever since, so that, as I have said elsewhere, it is an adequate description of science to say that it is 'thinking about the world in the Greek way.'"

A student, in talking with me recently, remarked that he had never seen any real definition of the scientific method, although he had heard much about it. My reply was that perhaps an idea of the scientific method was to be gained only by a study of the way in which men of science had gone about the solution of their problems. And a knowledge of how the Greeks thought about the world is to be gained only by a study of their work. But let us grant Burnet's contention, as I am more than willing to do without reservation. And passing over the controversy between him and Stace (p. vi) as to whether Parmenides was "the father of Materialism" let us look briefly at some of the consequences of "thinking about the world in the Greek way."

One great change which occurred in the period from Thales to Plato was the substitution of a world, perhaps even a universe, of law for the older world of caprice. The older, traditional view of the world broke down, and with the passing of the traditional view of nature, "the ancestral maxims of conduct" were more seriously questioned. Aristotle faced the problem of developing a system of ethics, as one result of the work of the earlier Greeks. Whether the results of Aristotle's attempts are to be regarded as wholly satisfactory or not is a question which I shall not attempt to answer. But there is evidence, drawn from his Greek and Roman successors, that his attempt was not wholly satisfactory to them.

It has been said that the aim of the Stoics was to develop a "philosophy for the practical man." Cleanthes, leading political philosopher of his day in Athens, and probably the most influential of all in the selection of candidates for university professorships, tried to stabilize the view of the world which had been attained by his time, and accused Aristarchus of Samos of impiety for suggesting a new view of the nature of the sun. There is little doubt that the Roman poet Horace, from whose ode I have taken my text, lived in an even worse time than that of Cleanthes. For some reason, the philosophy for the practical man had not worked out as the Stoics thought it might, and the older view of nature had never been fully restored. But would the substitution of Jove and his thunderbolts for the view of nature current in the time of Horace really have improved conditions very much? Or was there some other phase of the problem, some other unknown quantity in the equation? And were the men of science of previous centuries the ones most blameworthy for the development of the conditions which Horace lamented?

[2] "Early Greek Philosophy," 4th ed., 1930, p. v.

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## A SIMPLE METHOD OF CONTROLLING TERMITES

ACCORDING to various reports termites cause damage to frame buildings in this country that amounts to millions of dollars annually. This damage could be reduced considerably if precautions were taken to prevent the termites from entering a building while it is being constructed. The author has found a very simple and inexpensive method of keeping them out of his own home, and it should be applicable to almost any building regardless of the kind of material used in its construction. At every place where the building touches the ground discarded lubricating oil drained from the crankcase of an automobile was poured into little ditches around the supporting foundation. The house used for the experiment has 56 concrete piers in the foundation. Around each of these about a quart of discarded oil was poured. A proportionate amount was poured around the base of the chimney. One place around some concrete steps was inadvertently overlooked. At this place termites entered the house, but at no other place. These were killed with fumes of chloroform, and oil was applied to the place of entry. Although the soil around the house is badly infested with termites, the building has been free from them, with the one exception mentioned, since it was built early in 1938.

The oil stays in the ground for a long time and does not diffuse more than a few inches from the little ditches. Apparently it does not affect the growth of shrubs six inches away. No doubt crude oil would give as good results as oil drained from motors.

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## HUMBOLDT CURRENT IN 1941

ALONG the west coast of South America and in the Galapagos, there is a generally accepted tradition of a seven-year cycle associated with the Humboldt (Peru) Current. This belief has been shared by many