MEDICINE

Disease Hints from Blood

➤ CLUES to treatment of heart disease and infantile paralysis may come from research on blood such as is now being carried on through the National Blood Program of the American Red Cross.

This possibility for the future was suggested by Dr. Ross T McIntire, war-time Surgeon General of the Navy and now administrator of the National Blood Program, when he appeared as guest of Watson Davis, director of Science Service, on Adventures in Science, radio program presented under the auspices of Science Service over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

The National Blood Program is designed to provide blood and blood derivatives for medical use throughout the nation. Whole blood and blood plasma, fibrin foam sponges for checking bleeding at operations, fibrin film substitutes for the brain's covering membranes, antihemophilic globulin, immune serum globulin for checking measles are already being processed and distributed through the program. All of these come from the blood being given by Americans to the score of regional centers already in operation.

But as more centers are opened and more blood flows into the reservoirs for saving life and health, some can be spared for research to find new uses for blood in treating disease.

"That research has just begun," Dr. McIntire said. "But we know that everything for health, growth, for maturing, is in or eventually gets into our blood. We already know scientists have identified some 60 proteins in plasma. Only a few are in medical use. It may well be that the future will unlock the secrets of blood that may furnish the clue to treatment of heart disease and infantile paralysis."

Science News Letter, January 22, 1949

PSYCHOLOGY

Clue to Personality

➤ A PSYCHOLOGIST who counted the number of lines spoken by each of the characters in Shakespeare's plays believes he may have found a clue to your personality—as well as the little-known personality of the immortal bard.

Harold Grier McCurdy of the University of North Carolina explains that he first assumed that fictional literature is a projection of the author's personality. Thus, you can study the personality of the author by studying his work.

He counted the lines spoken by Shakespearean characters in 36 plays. Excluded was "Henry VIII," which may have been finished by another author. Also excluded was the controversial suggestion that Sir Francis Bacon or someone else wrote all of the Shakespeare plays. In addition, he counted seven plays by the early Greek poet, Sophocles, and four novels by the English writer, Charlotte Bronte.

Dr. McCurdy said that his findings support the idea that the human personality—both yours and Shakespeare's—is an orderly arrangement of constituents with one ingredient dominating the others.

In Shakespeare's case, this organization of the personality was pointed up as he grew older, the psychologist explains.

Shakespeare, he found, gave a few more lines, proportionately, to his subsidiary characters than either Sophocles or the English novelist. The main character, who had the most lines, was given a "character weight" of 100, with other parts getting lower ratings. The novels were given a "page weight", because of the different structure of the novel.

Comparing 14 Shakespearean comedies with 14 tragedies, Dr. McCurdy found that the lesser roles rated more lines in the comedies.

Dividing the plays into three groups of 12 plays each, in order of their dates, it was discovered that the later plays gave more emphasis on the central character and the subsidiary parts had fewer lines.

The theory that personality development is a matter of organizing was advanced by the late Dr. William McDougall of Duke University. He compared the personality with an army in the field. Dr. McCurdy's study of this theory, by a mathematical approach to Shakespeare, has been published in the JOURNAL OF PERSONALITY (Sept).

Science News Letter, January 22, 1949

GENERAL SCIENCE

Time Judgment Important Traffic Study Reveals

➤ YOU MAKE a judgment of time—not distance—when you drive your car into an opening between vehicles in traffic.

This theory was announced by the Yale University Bureau of Highway Traffic, in a report issued as a part of a study to find how to design safer highways.

Movement of cars was studied with motion pictures made on the Henry Hudson Parkway near George Washington Bridge in New York and at Pulaski Circle in Hartford, Conn. The investigation was made by three former Yale students, F. Houston Wynn of the Territory of Hawaii Department of Public Works, Stewart M. Gourlay of the City of Detroit Department of Street Railways, and Richard I. Strickland, of the Port of New York Authority.

If you're an average motorist, the study indicated, you need a "distance" of six seconds before entering the passing or through lane after a stop sign. But you will weave into an adjacent lane with the car in motion in two and one-half seconds.

The report said that time studies of driving might be used to plan highways to accommodate most motorists.

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ORNITHOLOGY

Discover Birds that Kill with Cleanliness

➤ HERE'S one Junior can tell Mom about on Saturday nights. It's the story of birds that kill themselves with too much bathing.

Pacific fulmars, gull-like cousins of the famed albatross and the stormy petrels of the Atlantic, have a passion for bathing. They will bathe themselves for more than an hour at a stretch. Sometimes, a scientist reported, they take such a long bath that they get water-logged, sink and drown.

This sad end of some captive fulmars was observed by Henry Kritzler, a national research fellow at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, Calif. He lured some Pacific fulmars into captivity to study them.

Unlike the stormy petrels of the Atlantic, they proved to be quite peaceful in captivity. But the fastidious fulmar's love for taking a bath can be his undoing.

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