

HYBRIDIZATION OF MAN AND APE TO BE ATTEMPTED IN AFRICA

The question of how close is the relationship between the anthropoid apes and human kind may be settled by the experiments on hybridization about to be started at the Pasteur Institute at Kindia, French Guinea. Last year the Pasteur Institute of Paris was allotted by the Governor General of French West Africa a large estate three miles from Kindia on an elevated and salubrious plateau four thousand feet above the sea. Here laboratories and residences for the staff and native habitations have been erected, and parks provided for the animals necessary for the preparation of serums and vaccines to counteract tropical diseases.

Since Kindia is situated in the natural habitat of various kinds of apes and monkeys, and since these are susceptible to many human diseases to which other animals are immune, it is hoped that experiments carried on here may lead to knowledge of the cause and cure of some of the ills that afflict humanity. Dr. A. Calmette, sub-director of the Pasteur Institute of Paris, in announcing the program of the African station, stated that physiologists may here find facilities for carrying on experiments, not only in the rejuvenation of old men by the implantation of monkey glands, but also the reverse. Hitherto the difficulty of carrying on physiological or psychological researches with apes and monkeys has been that they could not be bred in captivity, but Major Wilbert, director of the Kindia Institute proposes to overcome this obstacle by resort to artificial fecundation, such as is in common use in horsebreeding.

Still more radical experiments in this field are to be attempted by a Russian biologist, Professor I. Ivanov of Moscow, who sails in January for Kindia, where according to an announcement of the U.S.S.R. Society of Cultural Relations, he will first try to cross the chimpanzee with the orang-utan and these with the gorilla, by artificial impregnation. If these succeed he will try to produce a hybrid between the highest anthropoids and the most primitive of the human race. In an interview given to a Moscow paper just before leaving home, Dr. Ivanov says of his plans:

"The problem of the possibility of man's crossing with anthropoid apes has occupied me for more than 20 years, but actual test of the matter has so far been impossible. The anthropoid apes do not breed in captivity, and to make the proper experiments it was seen to be necessary to make a special expedition to the lands where they are at home, which involves large expenditures. During the last few years I have made two trips outside of Russia and on these discussed my plans with well known French scientists, Calmette and Roux (director of the Pasteur Institute of Paris), both of whom promised to cooperate in the arrangement of the desired expedition. A short time ago I presented the plan before the Russian Academy of Sciences, and as a result the Academy granted me \$10,000 for the proposed expedition, so that I shall be able to depart in November or December for Africa."

There are no authenticated cases of such a crossing between apes and humans in spite of the stories circulated in tropical countries from ancient times to the present. It is Dr. Calmette's hope that competent biological investigators from America or elsewhere may make use of the unique situation and opportunities of the Pasteur Institute at Kindia for physiological experimentation.
