

## Interesting Items

### FACTS ABOUT THE EARTH

Professor Alfred Joy, astronomer at Mount Wilson Observatory, states that compared with the earth, the fastest airplane travels at only a snail's pace. He has found, according to Popular Mechanics, that the earth is whirling about the center of a galaxy, its star system, at a rate of 9,000 miles a minute. It is also revolving about the sun at 1,100 miles a minute, besides turning about on its axis once a day.—Alliance Weekly.

Reference has been previously made in these columns to the teletype-setter, a machine which can set the type on every linotype machine in every newspaper plant in the nation, from a master keyboard in one city. The International Telephone and Telegraph Company announces the perfecting of a machine "that will transmit the entire contents of a newspaper across a continent, and reproduce the original exactly, all within a few minutes." This machine has been built at laboratories in Hindon, England.—Selected.

A writer in The Missionary Review of the World reports 30,000 Mohammedans in Brazil. Islam was introduced by African slaves, and more recently by immigrants from Syria. Few of these Mohammedans observe the holy seasons and rites of their religion. A few years ago some Brazilian communities sent a delegate to a Mohammedan conference in the Near East, and since then there have been some signs of renewed interest. In Buenos Aires, Argentine, there is a Pan Islamic Association. In all South America there are from 160,000 to 180,000 Mohammedans, among whom there is no special evangelical Christian work. The Bible societies, however, in centers where immigration is constant, distribute Arabic Scriptures.—Selected.

An earthquake that not only was the largest recorded in the United States but the longest began last December in a sparsely settled section of Nevada. The greatest shock came on the last evening of the year and since that time thousands of smaller shocks have been recorded.

According to geologists it was caused by forces down deep towards the earth's core, and this probably accounts for the fact that there was so little damage done. No lives and very little property were lost during this period of tremors. The shocks were clearly felt over an area of 400,000 square miles. Top soil was shaken and disturbed over a large area and it even affected the flow of springs within the area.—Pathfinder.

### MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Marriages performed throughout the United States in 1932 numbered 981,759, or 79,032 fewer than in the preceding year, which is a decrease of 7.5 per cent. This is the first time in twenty-one years, according to the Associated Press, that the number fell below the million mark. On the other hand, divorces also fell off 12.7 per cent, from 183,664 in 1931 to 160,329 in 1932. This compares with a reduction of 4.1 per cent in the number granted from 1930 to 1931, while the 3,900 marriages annulled during 1932 compares with 4,339 for the preceding year. Prior to 1931, the lowest marriage rate since 1867 occurred in 1917, when large numbers of the male population were in war service. If 981,759 marriages a year are considered too few, then 160,329 divorces in a year are certainly still entirely too many. But it is better than 183,664 and

we are thankful for the decrease.—Methodist-Protestant Recorder.

Beer and cigarettes are not on sale in Hume, an Ohio village of 200 population. Though the town is 150 years old, they have never been sold there. It has two general stores, a garage and a church. There is no law against the sale of these commodities, but it just never has been done, with no likelihood of it starting.—Selected.

Remarkable increase in the sale of Bibles has been noted by the New South Wales branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Last year it sold 29,486 Bibles, twice as many as in 1931. An official says the increase is due to the depression.—Selected.

### THE WORLD'S RIVERS

The Tiber is only 230 miles long.

The world-famous Orontes is only 240 miles long.

The Zambezi, in South America, is 1,800 miles long.

Slow rivers flow at the rate of three to seven miles per hour.

Twelve creeks in the United States bear the name of Rhine.

Every ancient city of note was located on or near the sea or a river.

The Ganges is 1,570 miles long and drains an area of 750,000 square miles.

The Hudson River from its source to the ocean is 400 miles in length.

The branches of the Mississippi have an aggregate length of 15,000 miles.

For over 1,200 miles the Nile does not receive a single tributary stream.

The River Jordan has its origin in one of the largest springs in the world.

In islands of too small size to have rivers, creeks are dignified by that name.

The Connecticut, the principal stream of New England, is 450 miles in length.

During a single flood of the Yangste Kiang, in China, 600,000 people were drowned.

The most extensive protective river works in Europe are at the mouth of the Danube.

The Rhine is only 960 miles long, but drains a territory nearly double the area of Texas.

The Irtysh, in Siberia, is 2,200 miles in length and drains 600,000 miles of territory.—Selected.

### BABIES

At the present moment the birth rate in the United States is at the lowest level in history. The number of births for each 1,000 of our population was at 18 in 1932—a drop of four per cent, from 1931. In 1915, the rate was 25.1 births for every 1,000 population. The largest decreases have been in cities—such as Los Angeles and San Francisco—which have the largest proportion of "pure American" stock among their citizens. In San Francisco, the births are no longer more numerous than the deaths.

All this, of course, leads to speculation. Experts, long ago, estimated that this country would stop growing in population at about 1950. They are now putting the deadline nearer. Census forecasters who predicted a population of 140,000,000 by 1940 are now marking down the figure to 131,000,000.

Among other things, the birth rate decline has increased the proportionate number of old people in the country. Between 1920 and 1930, the number of persons more than 65 years of age increased 34 per cent. During the last three years that increase has been greatly accelerated.—Christian Herald.

### BIBLE DISTRIBUTION

The two greatest Bible Societies, the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society, recently published reports of the year's work. The American Bible Society's report is summarized as follows: "For the first time in eight years the issues of Scriptures are less than the 9,000,000 mark. Even so, they still remain larger than those of any of the preceding 109 years of the Society's history. There were 244,410 Bibles, 426,129 Testaments, 7,396,617 Portions, or a total of 8,067,156 volumes of Scripture issued during the year under review." Their receipts were \$582,865. The British Society reports: Bibles issued, 1,096,967; Testaments, 1,027,720; Portions, 8,492,774; total, 10,617,470. They added twelve new languages to their list, now numbering 667. Both societies are doing fine work.—Methodist-Protestant Recorder.

Sir Charles Marston, in a recent address in London, is reported by the London Christian as follows: "Discoveries based upon the results of recent excavations in Palestine and Mesopotamia go to show that the original religion of the world was monotheism, with a subsequent deterioration into polytheism and the belief in evil spirits. Moreover, so far from belief in the hereafter being a slow and gradual growth, it had become clear that all primitive peoples believed in another life. The theory of evolution also had been overthrown. Definite traces of the Flood had been found. It had been assumed that the Babylonian accounts of the Deluge were the original documents from which the Genesis story of the Flood was written; but there was now a strong presumption that the Babylonian versions were corruptions of the Genesis original."—Alliance Weekly.

In Norway drunkenness is proved scientifically right at the police station. A drop of blood is examined for alcoholic content and if it contains 2.61 per thousand of alcohol the man is intoxicated.—Pathfinder.

The depression has curtailed the income of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism by one-half and the number of militant atheists has been so reduced that the association is threatened with extinction because of lack of funds, according to the organization's seventh annual report.—Selected.

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In 1930, forest fires in the United States swept over a total of 52,000,000 acres, an area larger than Ohio and Indiana combined, according to the United States Forestry Service. There were 190,980 forest fires last year. Careless smokers were responsible for more fires and greater losses than any other cause. The damage done by forest fires last year is estimated at \$65,968,350, not including damage to young growth, wild life and watershed values.—Los Angeles Times.

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Eugene Davenport, LL.D., the lone delegate cast his vote against repeal in the Michigan convention on the Prohibition Amendment, was the butt of newspaper wits all over the country, but not in Michigan. There he is recognized as one of the leaders of the science of agriculture. For twenty-seven years he was dean of the Illinois State Agricultural College and has been honored with LL.D. and D. Sc. degrees by leading universities. No delegate was his superior in intelligence and character, and though he stood alone when the vote was taken, he and the cause in which he stood as the sole representative of thousands of his fellow citizens were treated with respect.—Selected.