

IN THIS ISSUE

NUTRITIONAL deficiencies in their preclinical states have been found to be very common among all economic groups of our population. The circumstances producing a situation of such importance to national health and vitality are discussed by Dr. Norman Jolliffe in an article entitled, "Nutritional Failures: Their Causes and Prevention." Dr. Jolliffe points out that the causes are manifold and include such varied causes as food processing methods, individual food habits, knowledge of food values, poverty, and the effect of illness on nutritional status. The best efforts of professional persons in many fields and intelligent cooperation of the public are required to solve the nutrition problem which is so fundamentally affected by cultural, social, and economic aspects of our national life. The important contribution which the practicing physician and the public health worker can make to a national program for better nutrition is discussed by Dr. Jolliffe, who offers many specific and practical suggestions.



When the National Socialists came into power in 1933, Hitler not only launched into a vast construction and armament program; he deliberately set out to increase the birth rate through various schemes such as marriage loans and grants to large families. That the sharp rise of the birth rate following Hitler's accession to power was a real situation is conceded by impartial students. The question remains as to whether this abrupt reversal in the trend of the birth rate was due directly to the population policies instituted by Hitler or whether it was due to other socio-economic changes. In an article, "The Relation of Employment Levels to Births in Germany," Mr. Dudley Kirk adduces evidence that, in Germany and other countries, indices of marriages and births react sensitively to abrupt changes in employment conditions. The data

strongly suggest that a major part of the rise in German births after 1933 can be attributed to reemployment in the construction and armament program rather than to any specific National Socialist population policy.



The significance of visual threshold in dim illumination as an index of nutritional status with respect to vitamin A has not been clearly demonstrated despite numerous investigations. Failure to improve the visual thresholds of subjects to whom vitamin A was administered over a period of six weeks is reported by Eleanor P. Hunt and Kenneth M. Hayden in "Variability of Visual Threshold," which is the ninth in a series of reports on Medical Evaluation of Nutritional Status. The authors also present a detailed statistical analysis of the extent of individual variations in threshold which are to be expected as the result of errors of measurement, and as the result of temporal change in an individual's threshold.



The high prevalence of dental defects among young men examined for military service has brought this health problem into prominence during the past year. Data from a survey among high school students in New York City are the basis for an interesting epidemiological observation concerning the comparative frequency of dental conditions among children from different socio-economic groups. The numbers of teeth attacked by dental caries, past and present, per child examined were found to be equal among high school students from families of high income and from families of low income. Dr. Henry Klein discusses these findings in the tenth report in the series on Medical Evaluation of Nutritional Status, "Susceptibility to Dental Caries and Family Income." The author concludes that "caries susceptibility is determined by factors other than environmental variables associated with socio-economic status." Although dental care prevented extractions among children of high-economic status, it had not prevented the occurrence of caries to an extent equal to that among children from low-income families.



Plasma content of ascorbic acid has been used increasingly in the past few years as a diagnostic criterion for the subclinical state of ascorbic acid deficiency. Determination of the amount of ascorbic acid in plasma is

made easily and objectively by use of the photoelectric colorimeter, and this method has proven valuable for surveys and other types of investigations. In the paper, "An Analysis of Sources of Errors in the Photelometric Macromethod of Determining Ascorbic Acid in Plasma," one of a series on Medical Evaluation of Nutritional Status, Miss Dorothy G. Wiehl and Myron Kantorovitz discuss the accuracy of findings on plasma specimens which may be expected under specific conditions. When important sources of potentially large errors are controlled, ascorbic acid content is determined with a high degree of accuracy.