

both King and country. Then came his fall. On July 17, 1791, the demonstration took place in the Champ-des-Mars to secure signatures for a petition demanding the dethronement of the King. There was disorder and violence, Bailly gave the order for the crowd to be dispersed by force, fire was opened, some forty people killed and with the "massacre of the Champ-des-Mars" Bailly's popularity waned. A few months later, he resigned his posts and retired to Nantes. Two more years passed and against advice he visited Laplace at Melun. He was recognized and denounced, and was sent to Paris, where he was tried on November 10, 1793; on the next day he was condemned, and on November 12—a bitterly cold wet day—was taken in an open cart to the ill-fated Champ-des-Mars and there guillotined amidst the execrations of the people he had done his best to serve. Save for Lavoisier, who fell on the scaffold six months later, Bailly was the most distinguished man of science who fell a victim to the Revolution. He had, however, played a conspicuous and honourable part, and to-day his statue stands in the gardens of the Luxembourg.

Vitamin B₁

THE structure of vitamin B₁ was made certain by its synthesis, recently announced from the laboratory of Prof. Williams of Columbia University (see NATURE, Aug. 29, p. 372), and this has now been repeated elsewhere. Grewe (*Hoppe-Seyler's Zeitschrift für physiologische Chemie*, 242, 89; 1936), working in Windaus's laboratory at Göttingen, describes the preparation of the pyrimidine half of the molecule, and completely confirms the latest formula put forward by Williams, though mention is only made of Williams's earlier suggestions which he himself has now modified. Grewe goes on to state that he had intended to work out a synthesis of the vitamin from the new pyrimidine derivative when he learned, through Prof. Windaus, that Andersag and Westphal had already accomplished this in the scientific laboratories of the I.G. at Elberfeld, and that patent protection had been sought. Prof. Williams's work was carried out with the collaboration of Merck and Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J.; it seems, therefore, on the cards that there may be some interesting developments in the patent field, should the synthesis of vitamin B₁ become practicable on a commercial scale.

Half-Castes and World Peace

A NOVEL view of the problem of the half-caste and of the role which might be played by communities of mixed origin in the promotion of world peace is taken by Mr. Cedric Dover in a memorandum which he presented to the International Peace Congress held on September 3-6. In a cursory survey of the figures, he points out that not only are half-castes more numerous than is realized generally, but that they form an appreciable proportion of the populations of the modern world. Mr. Dover, however, does not rely on the mere weight of number. He goes on to argue that half-caste communities, con-

sisting of 'marginal' men, who represent two cultures and exist under conditions of 'imperialism', owing to the presence of a dominant white population, present parallelisms, due to a common ethnic element derived from their white blood, a common language (English), a common religious belief, and common social and economic conditions. It is suggested, therefore, that the continued growth of ethnic relations and mixed populations should be accepted as part of the machinery of human evolution, of which advantage should be taken to promote the greater ethnic unity and cultural uniformity, which would afford an efficient counter to an aggressive spirit of nationalism, while the creation of a united front of marginal communities would lead inevitably to better international understanding.

IF Mr. Dover's suggestions to this end tend to a more rational attitude towards the half-caste, they will have accomplished much. Miscegenation, however, has not been overlooked as a possible ultimate solution of the colour question; but the world, it would seem, is not yet prepared, on present evidence of the effects of the crossing of widely diverse strains, to foster it deliberately or even to countenance it. The organization of a world-wide front of sufficient strength to make its weight felt demands resources and machinery, of which at present there seems little expectation. Quite possibly local loyalties would prove obstacles stronger than the communal parallelism upon which Mr. Dover would rely.

Roman Leicester

A FURTHER stage in the proceedings which will determine the future of Roman Leicester (see NATURE of August 29, p. 356) was reached on September 3, when an inquiry was held in the city by the Ministry of Health to examine the application of the Leicester Corporation to borrow £135,000 for the purpose of erecting baths on the site adjacent to the Jewry Wall, upon which archæological investigations are being conducted by Miss Kathleen Kenyon. The application was opposed by the Leicester Archæological Society, the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society and the Leicester Civic Society, bodies co-operating in the excavation. They were represented by Mr. Macgregor Clarkson; and Mr. P. K. Baillie Reynolds, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, was also present, representing the Office of Works. In the course of his evidence, Mr. Clarkson stressed the unique position which the site conferred on Leicester. The recent discoveries, he urged, made it possible to point to the civic centre of the city in three historic periods—the Town Hall of Roman times, the Guildhall of the Middle Ages, and the modern Town Hall. Miss Kenyon's evidence dealt with the important archæological features of the site added by her investigations, including part of the Forum and the ten feet depth added to the Jewry Wall, part of the Roman Town Hall, which, now standing at 35 ft. in total height, is one of the largest Roman walls in Britain. This wall is scheduled as an ancient monument.