

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

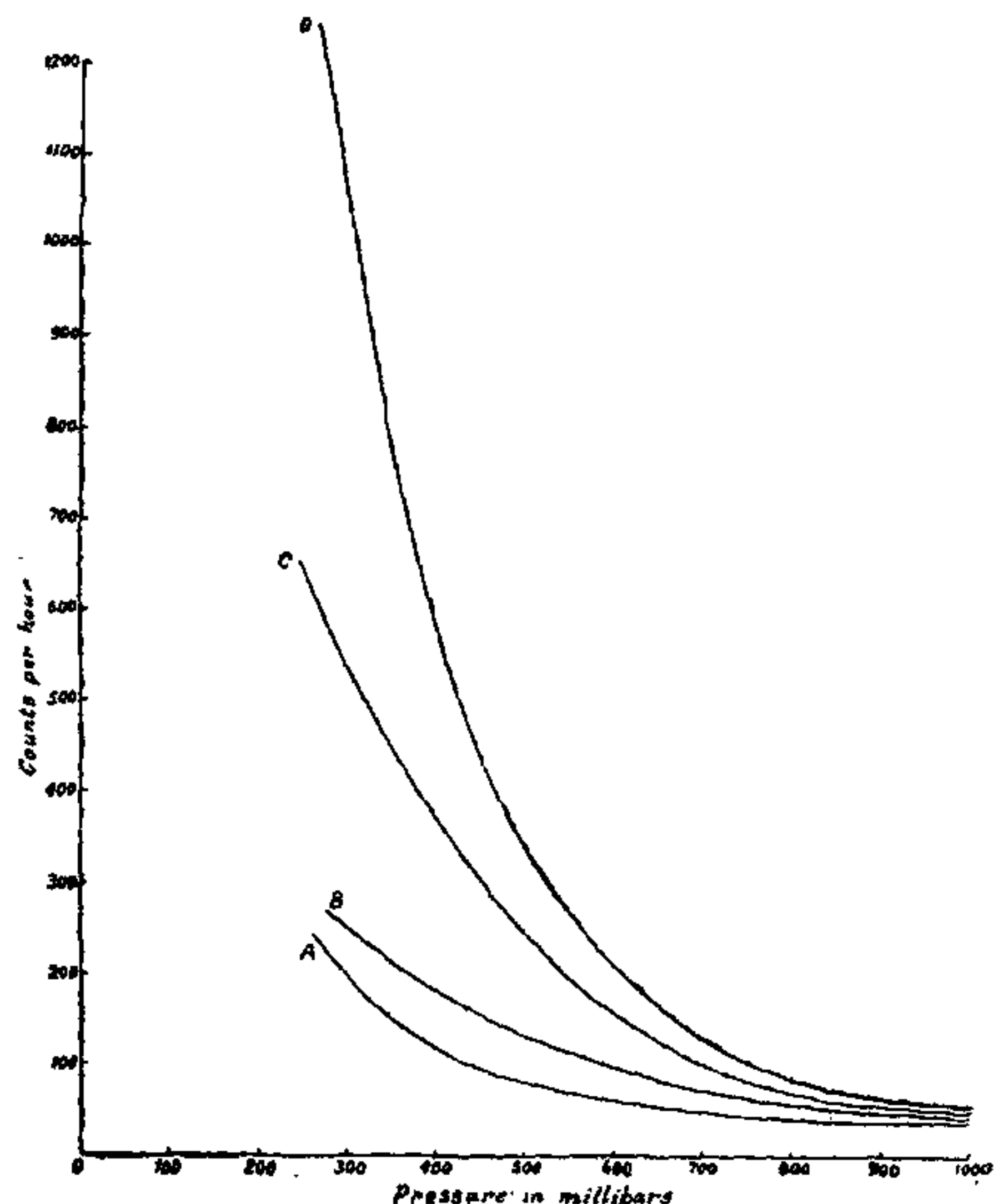
	PAGE		PAGE
Latitude Effect for Mesons. BY H. J. BHABHA, S. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR AIYA, H. E. HOTEKO AND R. C. SAXENA ..	98	Mode of Occurrence of Vitamin A in Shark Livers. BY ULLAL SUNDAR KINI	104
Effect of the Rate of Trickle on the Mass of the Drop. BY V. N. KELKAR ..	99	Pyrethrum in Kashmir. BY I. C. CHOPRA, M. L. DHAR, K. L. HANDA, M. HABIBULLAH AND P. ASSA NAND ..	104
Occurrence of Fluorspar near Malhan, Jubbulpur Dt., C.P. BY S. DEB AND S. K. ROY ..	99	The Occurrence of a Pseudobranch in the Family Ophicephalidæ (Teleostomi). BY L. S. RAMASWAMI ..	105
Occurrence of Garnetiferous Leptynite at Meenakshipuram, Cochin State. BY T. SUDHAKARA MENON ..	100.	Interesting Mode of the Life-Cycle of the Lung Worm, <i>Varestrongylus pneumonicus</i> Bhalerao, 1932. BY G. D. BHALERAO	106
Assay of the Growth-Promoting Activity of the "Fats" associated with some Cereals. BY (MISS) VIOLET DE SOUZA AND M. SREENIVASAYA ..	100	On the Pathogenicity of <i>Setaria cervi</i> (Rud. 1819) in Buffaloes. BY M. M. SARWAR ..	107
A Simple Micro-Macerator for Plant Analysis. BY J. J. CHINYOY ..	102	A New Sulphonamide. BY HABIB HASSAN AND LAL MOHAN SRIVASTAVA ..	107

LATITUDE EFFECT FOR MESONS

SCHEIN, Jesse and Wollan,^{1,2} and Schein, Jesse and Grötzinger³ have measured the variation with altitude of the vertical intensity of mesons penetrating 10 cms. of lead at Chicago, magnetic latitude 52.5° N. Similar measurements were made earlier by Dymond⁴ at Edinburgh, magnetic latitude 59° N, but the work was interrupted by the war and only a preliminary note has been published. No such measurements have yet been made near the geomagnetic equator. We have, therefore, measured in an airplane the vertical intensity of mesons penetrating a 20 cms. block of lead absorber at Bangalore, magnetic latitude 3.3° N, up to a height corresponding to a pressure of 275 millibars 32,000 ft., with a quadruple coincidence counter telescope in which the extreme counters were 35 cms. apart. The counters were 15 cms. long and $3\frac{1}{2}$ cms. in diameter. The geometry of the telescope was, therefore, such that a particle recorded at the maximum allowed angle of 22° would travel a thickness of the atmosphere and absorber only 8 per cent. greater than a particle arriving vertically.

In the figure we have plotted our results giving the intensity of mesons penetrating 20 cms. of lead at 3.3° N as curve A and, for comparison, the latest results of Schein, Jesse and Wollan² for the intensity of mesons at 52.5° N as curve B. The two curves have been fitted at sea-level to allow for the known latitude and longitude effect⁵ of 12 per cent. In the same figure we have plotted the variation of the total vertical intensity with altitude at 3.3° N as given by Neher and Pickering⁶ for a triple coincidence counter telescope as curve C, this curve being fitted to our curve so as to show a ratio of vertical meson intensity to total vertical intensity of 80 per cent. as observed at ground-level at Bangalore. Curve D gives the variation of the total vertical intensity with altitude as measured by Pfozter⁷ at a magnetic latitude of 49° N. The four curves together show at a glance the striking fact that whereas the latitude effect

between 3.3° N and 49° N of the total intensity shows a pronounced increase with altitude, the



Curve A—Vertical meson intensity at 3.3° N (Bhabha, Aiyar, Hoteko and Saxena). Curve B—Vertical meson intensity at 52.5° N (Schein, Jesse and Wollan 1941). Curve C—Vertical total intensity at 3.3° N (Neher and Pickering). Curve D—Vertical total intensity at 49° N (Pfozter).

penetrating component shows practically no such increase of latitude effect even to heights corresponding to a pressure of 275 millibars. Our results give at least qualitative support to the theory of Hamilton, Heitler and Peng⁸ according to which the penetrating component

should show only a slightly greater latitude effect than at sea-level up to the heights corresponding to a pressure of 100 millibars. The difference in the geometry of the counter telescopes used by the different authors and the statistical accuracy of the results do not yet permit a quantitative comparison.

A detailed report of this work together with other results will be published shortly elsewhere.

It is with pleasure that we express our gratitude to Col. M. C. Robinson, Commanding Officer of the 84th Air Depot of the U.S.A. Air Force, for giving the permission for the flight, and also to Major G. Denis, Capt. J. Claunch, Lt. Mack, and Sgt. Beaver, under him, for their whole-hearted co-operation.

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1. Schein, Jesse and Wollan, *Phys. Rev.*, 1940, **57**, 847. 2. —, —, —, *Ibid.*, 1941, **59**, 615. 3. —, — and Grötzing, *Ibid.*, 1940, **58**, 1027. 4. Dymond, *Nature*, 1939, **144**, 782. 5. Millikan, Neher and Pickering, *Phys. Rev.*, 1942, **61**, 397. 6. Neher and Pickering, *Ibid.*, 1942, **61**, 407. 7. Pfozner, *Zeits. f. Physik*, 1936, **23**, 102; 8. Hamilton, Heitler and Peng, *Phys. Rev.*, 1943, **64**, 78.