

ICHTHYOLOGY

Expedition Enters Mayan Jungle to Study Fish

THE TREK into practically unexplored jungle country where once Mayan Indians lived, has been begun by the University of Michigan zoological expedition to Guatemala. Along upper reaches of the San Pedro River the zoologists will seek rare fishes and mollusks, in an effort to learn more about the animal world and the foods of the great Mayan population, once scattered through the region in cities and villages.

The expedition is part of the program in which various sciences are focusing their specialized knowledge to account for the Mayan civilization, which was the highest and most remarkable of any attained by Indians in the New World. Dr. Carl Hubbs and Dr. Henry van der Schalie are joint leaders of the zoological party.

Science News Letter, April 6, 1935

DIETETICS

Too Much Cereal May Spoil Child's Appetite

THE PRESCHOOL child who has no appetite and dawdles over his meals may be getting too much bulk in his diet, and specifically too much cereal. This is the conclusion of a study made by Amy L. Daniels and Gladys Everson of the State University of Iowa.

"A diet bulky with cereals may satisfy a child's desire to eat before he has obtained all the elements he needs for growth and activity," comments the editor of the *Journal of Home Economics* (January) in which the scientific details of the study appear.

Lack of outdoor exercise and of vitamins, overfatigue and irregularity of meal times have all been considered as contributing to lack of appetite in the run-about child under school age, but in the Iowa study these factors were all carefully ruled out. The children all lived under the same conditions except for the kind of food they were given. Differences between the children were also ruled out by having the same child eat one kind of diet for sixteen days and then switch to the other kind.

The length of time spent in eating was used as the criterion of how the diet affected the child's appetite. When the children were fed the bulky diet contain-

ing the amount of cereal usually recommended for this age group, they took much longer to eat than when they were fed the less bulky, low-cereal diet.

One child never took longer than twenty minutes to eat breakfast while on the low-cereal diet but spent as much as three-quarters of an hour over this meal when on the high-cereal diet.

The only differences in the diet were in the bulk and the amount of cereal. The high-cereal diet was almost twice as bulky as the low-cereal diet. This factor of greater bulk resulting from larger amounts of cereal is considered a partial explanation of poor appetite in children of this age.

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MEDICINE

One Every 4.42 Seconds Enters Hospital Doors

ONE every 4.42 seconds—that is the rate at which Americans enter hospitals.

They stay, on the average, 14 days.

When they leave, a good many take babies home with them; for 701,143 babies were born in the hospitals of the United States last year.

These are new data on hospitals issued by the Council of Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association. (*Journal American Medical Association*, March 30.)

As might be guessed, the medical association found that persons stay considerably longer in governmental hospitals than they do in independent proprietary hospitals. One person in seventeen made use of some type of hospital last year.

Never before in this country have there been so many idle hospital beds as there were last year, this annual survey shows; some 218,000 beds were unoccupied. However, hospitals showed a business gain, for the length of patient stay so increased that institutions for the sick had a gain of 7,000,000 patient days over the previous year.

The hospital department of the association disagrees with the recent Alden B. Mills study which declared that there is a need for more rural hospitals. It is pointed out that rural hospitals had more unoccupied beds last year than had city hospitals. The proportion was 50.2 per cent. beds occupied in 2,003 rural hospitals against 62.4 per cent. beds occupied in 2,031 city hospitals.

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IN SCIENCE

GEOLOGY

New Spring Discovered in Hot Springs National Park

THE HOT Springs National Park has a new hot spring, one which will add approximately 25,000 gallons a day to the Park's supply of hot waters. The spring itself is not new, but its existence underground has just been discovered in connection with excavations for the promenade development.

The temperature of the spring is 148 degrees Fahrenheit. Its waters will be collected and run into the general hot water system, from which the bathhouses are supplied.

Science News Letter, April 6, 1935

MEDICINE

Caution Urged in Using Snake Venom

ADMITTING that moccasin snake venom is a promising treatment to control bleeding, the American Medical Association warns physicians to use caution, even in experimental use of the powerful poison.

That moccasin venom, injected under the skin, controls various types of bleeding successfully is reported by Dr. Samuel M. Peck and Dr. Nathan Rosenthal of Mount Sinai Hospital, New York. (*Jour. American Medical Association*, March 30)

Unfortunately, the physicians have concluded, this snake venom has no influence on the particular problem of hemophilia, congenital disease afflicting males of a royal line in Europe, as well as others. This disease is characterized by delayed clotting of the blood.

Commenting on the report which shows that moccasin venom has given a favorable response when other standard methods of curbing bleeding failed, the Association, through its council on pharmacy and chemistry, urges physicians to select the type of cases carefully for this treatment, and to watch for local reactions.

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E FIELDS

ZOOLOGY

Jellyfish Deadly Enemies Of Small Marine Fishes

JELLYFISH, though the popular synonymy for flabby spinelessness, are by no means harmless. They capture and devour baby fishes of all kinds in great numbers, says Dr. E. W. Gudger of the American Museum of Natural History, in the *Bulletin of the New York Zoological Society*. One specimen was kept under observation in an aquarium, and in six weeks ate a couple of dozen tiny fish.

Other species can capture and devour fish much larger than themselves. One, which Dr. Gudger describes, pulled itself over its catch like a mitten over a hand. Another, in its eagerness to get its stomach around its victim, literally turned itself inside out.

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METALLURGY

English Goldsmith Revives Lost Etruscan Bead Art

GOLD beads so tiny that a row an inch long would contain a hundred of them figure prominently in the intricate jewelry of the ancient Etruscans, who thrived in Italy before the rise of Rome. But the making of them became a lost art.

Now an English goldsmith named Blackband is able to make them again, by a process which he believes is identical with that used by the long-dead early masters of his craft.

Mr. Blackband's rediscovery was more or less accidental. He spilled a small quantity of molten gold, which splashed at it fell. When he gathered up the scattered precious metal, he found that the smallest drops had hardened into perfect little spheres. Now he purposely splashes molten gold-copper alloy onto a sloping shelf in a little box, and turns out "Etruscan" beadlets in quantity.

The next problem was to find out how to form them into the complicated patterns of double lines, hexagons and triangles such as figure on Etruscan jewelry. This proved to be not particularly

difficult. Drawing a wet line with a finely pointed camel's-hair pencil, Mr. Blackband saw his beads range themselves in rows along it, held by the surface tension of the water.

Then he used a wet hair-fine wire. The beads adhered to the wire. He bent it into the desired pattern, the beads still sticking in place, and then heated it until the wire and beads fused together. Now he can duplicate any Etruscan pattern.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

U. S. Children Largest in Northeast, Smallest in West

CHILDREN from the northeastern section of the United States are, on the whole, the largest and those from the western section are smallest, officers of the U. S. Public Health Service found in a study of body build of children throughout the country.

The study was limited to children of native white parents and grandparents, living in four different sections of the country. The northeastern section included the New England and Middle Atlantic States and the western section was limited to Utah and Nevada. Second largest children were found in states bordering the western Great Lakes. Next smallest were the children in a south central section extending from Kentucky to Texas.

The stockiest children come from the northeast section; those of intermediate build from the north-central and south-central regions and the least stocky from the western area. Differences in weight between children of the same age and sex in different regions were greater than differences in height. Fourteen-year-old boys from the Northeast weighed on the average nine pounds more than those from the West but were only about an inch taller.

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ICHTHYOLOGY

Fish Painting In Bingham Collection

THE painting reproduced on the cover of the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER for March 9 is part of the Bingham Oceanographic Collection of the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, and not in the Buffalo Museum of Science, as originally stated. When the painting was photographed, it was on loan at the Buffalo Museum.

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ASTRONOMY

Old Photographic Telescope Re-Used to Study Stars

THE PLEIADES, or "Seven Sisters," are not so sisterly as their name might indicate. New measurements with an ancient photographic telescope show them to be moving apart, going their separate ways, despite current astronomical ideas.

This discovery was announced by Prof. Jan Schilt, of the Columbia University department of astronomy. It is the result of the comparison of photographic plates made 67 years ago with similar plates made recently. The angular motion between the six visible and many lower-magnitude stars composing this familiar group is so small, however, that Prof. Schilt likened it to the movement of two inches in 100,000 years by an insect on 42d Street as it would appear to an observer on top of the Chrysler Building.

To make the new set of plates duplicate the old as nearly as possible, Prof. Schilt resurrected from a museum the old telescope originally used. It was made in 1868 by a Mr. Rutherford, an old-time trustee of Columbia University, and had long since been retired from use. However, with a new plate holder and specially made plates to give as nearly as possible the same effects as the old plates, it functions as well as ever.

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BOTANY

Famous Cherry Blossoms Early This Spring

See Front Cover

WASHINGTON'S famous Japanese cherry blossoms reflected the coaxing warmth and moisture of mid-March by blossoming a full two weeks earlier than usual. They were opening up rapidly on Friday, March 29, and by Sunday, the last day of the month, were in full glory. As a rule they do not reach their climax until about mid-April.

Penalty was exacted, however, for their precocity. Just as the trees had assumed the appearance of enormous fluffy snowballs, a stinging cold rainstorm swept over the city.

Some consolation, however, is to be expected; for this first burst of bloom, the single whites, is to be followed at short intervals by several other varieties of Japanese cherries, double whites and pinks, declared by some devotees to be even lovelier than the first flowers.

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