

## 25,000 Year Old Skulls

Archæology

While Cro-Magnon man ruled Europe, 25,000 years ago, he had as neighbors in Africa a race who used tools and weapons like his own, but who in their bodily make-up so closely resembled men of today that they may fairly be called "modern." This great backward extension of the history of the "modern" type of human beings is the most significant point about the recent discovery by American and French anthropologists of a number of ancient skeletons in a shell mound at Mechta, Algeria. This opinion was expressed by Prof. Fay-Cooper Cole of the University of Chicago.

For the past three years Beloit College has been conducting excavations in France and North Africa, under a fund given by Dr. Frank Logan, Chicago philanthropist. Dr. George Collier, director of the museum at Beloit, has spent much time in the field, while active excavation has been carried on by graduate students in anthropology from the University of Chicago.

Last year Alonzo Pond, one of the American workers, found the skeleton of a child in a shell-heap of Cro-Magnon age at Mechta. This year another worker, Paul Nesbitt, took out three more skeletons, while previously a Frenchman named Debrugge had secured a skeleton there.

A careful study of the shell mound and its contents indicate that it



THE MECHTA SKULL; its one-time owner was a contemporary of Cro-Magnon man some 25,000 years ago, but he was a "modern" in his physical make-up

seems to be like the Old Stone Age finds of Europe of 25,000 years ago. No New Stone Age objects occur in the site, and no bones of any domestic animals were found—domestication of animals is a "modern" accomplishment. "We seem to be justified in saying that the site is pre-Neolithic, and is probably as old as the Aurignacian," Prof. Cole concludes.

The skeletons are neither Neanderthal nor Cro-Magnon. One skull, a woman's, shows negroid characteristics, but the others appear to be rather close to the Mediterranean type, though somewhat more primitive.

Fuller details will be announced when the material shall have arrived in America.

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## Sphinxes Discovered

Archæology

Digging 60 feet beneath a tourist headquarters at Sakkhara, the expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art has unearthed a number of stone sphinxes and statues. The building stood close to the ruins of the temple of Queen Hatshepsut, and was recently vacated so that archæologists might explore the site.

The stone sculpture, roughly broken, dates back to the sixteenth century B. C., when Queen Hatshepsut was overthrown by Thutmose III. By the new king's orders, all statues of the fallen queen were ordered mutilated and smashed, and the beautifully carved, smiling faces of the Queen were thoroughly battered by workmen wherever they found representations of her.

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## Neutral on Metric System

General Science

The Bureau of Standards' stand regarding the compulsory adoption of the metric system was for the first time publicly announced when Dr. George K. Burgess, director of the national bureau, made this subject a part of his address to the twenty-first National Conference on Weights and Measures. While nothing has been said before, it has been hinted that this government organization was an ardent advocate of the system.

Dr. Burgess stated: "As to the attitude of the Bureau in relation to the compulsory adoption of the metric system, we may state that the facts in the case are that in relation to all proposals advocating the compulsory adoption of the metric system of weights and measures in the United States the policy of the Bureau is one of neutrality—neither to advocate nor to discourage. I can say definitely and emphatically that the Bureau is not advocating the adoption of the metric system for commercial or industrial uses whether by legislation or otherwise, nor has it ever done so during the period that I have been Director."

This statement was made to the weights and measures officials of the country assembled here for a four-day meeting to discuss practical questions affecting their official duties.

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The great standard article of food on the menu of the California Indians was acorn mush.

## Meteor Air Waves Simulate Quake

Astronomy

Apparent "earthquakes" accompanying a great meteor, such as that which flashed over Georgia and South Carolina recently, are really due to air waves from the speeding celestial projectile. This is the opinion of Prof. Charles P. Olivier, of the University of Virginia, and recognized authority on meteoric astronomy.

It is not possible for such a meteor to cause an actual tremor of the earth, he stated. However, as it passes through the earth's atmosphere, it causes air waves, similar to those caused by a projectile from a large gun. The meteor may travel as fast as 25 miles a second, or around fifty times the speed of the shell from the gun, and so the air waves are much stronger. As they strike houses and buildings, they cause them to vibrate, even breaking window panes and

cracking plaster walls. To a person within such a building, the effects are practically indistinguishable from those of an earthquake.

Professor Olivier, who is president of the American Meteor Society, an organization of volunteer observers of meteors, has not received any reports of the Georgia meteor. In fact, he said, as the society has no members any nearer than Florida, none are likely to have seen this one. Reports that the meteor was "as large as a house" are probably exaggerated, and due to irradiation, an effect in the eye that makes brilliant objects appear larger than the same things when they are dark. A meteor weighing only a hundred pounds and traveling with high velocity, would produce all the effects described, he said.

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