

## Plaster Casts of the Head Hunters

*Anthropology*

MABEL COOK COLE in *Savage Gentlemen* (VanNostrand):

After this comradeship had been established, my husband thought it would be safe to begin making life masks. The duties of the anthropologist are many: he not only makes pictures and takes body measurements of the people he studies, but he must, if possible, make life masks which can be used for study purposes and also be an aid to the sculptor who reproduces groups of the people in life size for the Museum. But making life masks of wild men is not easy. The scientist must be perfectly sure of his subjects' confidence and friendliness, he must overcome their alarm in submitting to a process that is not pleasant even to persons who appreciate the value of masks. I was uneasy when he plastered up their faces, for I was afraid they would be dead from suffocation when the masks were removed. I remembered the warning, "Only your names will come back to the village."

They all survived, but from the

### Surgery Perils Minds

*Psychology*

Mental and emotional disorders may follow surgical operations, but the operations themselves are rarely the cause of the upsets, Dr. Robert B. McGraw of Columbia University explained to physicians gathered for the Graduate Fortnight of the New York Academy of Medicine.

The causes of mental disturbances after operations may be found in the mental and emotional make-up of the patient. The operation is generally only a provoking incident. The same disturbance might have been caused by any other happening that would have too greatly strained the patient's ability to adapt himself.

"Usually an operation is only an incident in the chain of circumstances leading to an emotional disorder as a breaking down of the adaptive ability of the organism. The adaptive ability of the patient breaks down at times of special stress," Dr. McGraw stated. "A serious operation may likewise be an important event in an individual's physical and psychic life and its effects both for good and for ill hard to measure."

Dr. McGraw advised physicians to consider carefully the emotional background of patients before urging any but emergency operations.

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amount of hair and eyebrows that came off with the plaster, I think that some of them suffered a good deal. He gave a Dewey badge (which cost ten cents in Chicago) to each victim, and that healed all wounds. A man who was not keen about having his face plastered up wanted to buy one of the badges, and Bacilio informed him that it would cost five pesos. After that we had no difficulty in securing subjects. That was good pay for the loss of a few hairs.

Juan was a great help in working the plaster, and he really moved quite fast. Otherwise, of course, his hands would have set in the pans, as it was dental plaster and set quickly. When it was over, everything was covered with plaster—dishpan, washbowl, and every other available dish, to say nothing of the chair, floor, my husband, Juan, and the victim; but we were so relieved that there had been no casualties, that we did not mind cleaning up.

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### Unlucky Sabre-Tooth

*Paleontology*

The rare case of a big sabre-tooth tiger which lost one of its long sharp sabers while it was still a kitten has been discovered among the fossil bones of prehistoric animals taken from asphalt pits near Los Angeles, Calif. The kitten, which lost one of its most important permanent teeth, went about for the rest of its life with a strange one-sided expression. The socket soon filled in, and the dry skull which tells the story of the tiger's calamity has a peculiar snarling look where one side of the face was "lifted".

These big tigers of the prehistoric forest, which were literally armed to the teeth, were blood-suckers, depending on their sabers to pierce the hide of an animal chosen for dinner. Loss of both sabers would have forced a tiger to change its food habits completely, but this was apparently an almost unknown accident. Out of 1,000 sabre-tooth tiger skulls only three show loss of one saber. None had lost both. A few adult tigers in their active warfare for livelihood had broken a saber tooth down to a stump only about two inches. But the stump in such cases became covered over by a protective growth of dentine, and with this defective weapon the tiger carried on.

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## Tree Rings Date Ruins

*Archæology*

The age of Pueblo Bonito and other famous Pueblo ruins in the southwest is at last to be revealed by the slow but sure detective methods of science. A telegraphic message received by Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society, states that timbers from ancient trees collected this summer are adequate to complete the long-sought tree-ring calendar. With this as a yardstick it will be possible to date any prehistoric pueblo which has any wooden beams left in the ruins.

The principle of the tree-ring calendar is that the rings added to a growing tree each year vary in dry, moist, or average years, so that any given ring is like a dark mark. By examining cross-sections of old trees and tracing back the overlapping series of tree-ring dates, it has been hoped that the ancient beams found at Pueblo Bonito might be dated.

Dr. A. E. Douglass, astronomer, of the University of Arizona, and Neil M. Judd, leader of the National Geographic Society expeditions to Pueblo Bonito, have studied 5,000 tree sections, including some located this summer after years of search. The calendar up to this season had been carried back to 1260 A. D., and still was not old enough to match the series of years recorded at Pueblo Bonito. Another set of pre-Columbian tree-ring dates covered 586 years in some unknown centuries. The link between the two series has now been discovered, and the dates will soon be announced.

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Bananas turn dark if kept in too cold a place.

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