How Much Rain Will Break Drought?

Meteorology—Public Health

Dry Weather May Cause More Milk Sickness

EVEN NORMAL rainfall now would not relieve the drought greatly, because it would not make up for the deficiency of past months, C. L. Mitchell, principal meteorologist at the U. S. Weather Bureau told Science Service.

"One question that comes up now," he said, "is how much rain would be needed to really break the drought. Even if a half inch fell over a wide area, I would hesitate to say that it was broken, for a week later there would be no effect of it left. Normally at this time about a half inch falls in a week, so that would merely prevent conditions from getting worse. Far heavier rains are needed, in order to make up for the weeks in which this half inch has not fallen.

"In Arizona and Utah, where there have been cloudbursts recently it is a result of the warm air from the south meeting colder air from the northwest, but these are all beyond the Rockies. They will help the cattle in that region, but they will not help the corn and wheat growing areas farther east.

"The heat wave is entirely gone, and it is cool now over a large area, as a result of the high pressure area. But there is still no real disturbance, or low, to work in conjunction with this and bring real rains."

Poison From Snake Root

Milk sickness, a disease contracted by drinking infected milk, or dairy products made from such milk, is likely to increase in many parts of the country as a result of the drought, Dr. James F. Couch, of the Bureau of Animal Industry, told Science Service.

The poisonous milk comes from cows that have eaten the white snake root, he said. This plant occurs mainly in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, parts of Tennessee and eastern Missouri. As the drought cuts the supply of the usual feed of the stock, the animals will eat more of other plants than normally, and so are likely to consume large quantities of the white snake root. Hence the danger, and the need for caution on the part of dairymen.

The danger is particularly acute in rural regions in these states, Dr. Couch declared, but in the cities the strict inspection of dairy products will probably cause less risk.

Symptoms of the disease in human beings include nausea, pain in the epigastrium (commonly known as "belly-ache"), weakness and headache. Cattle that have the disease are weak, and show fits of trembling. They take no exercise. Unfortunately, however, the cows may not show these symptoms until after they have given the poisonous milk. Dr. Couch stated that he knew of a case in which a whole family was taken sick and one member died before the cow that gave the milk showed any signs at all. Therefore dairy farmers should be very careful of what their cattle eat.

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The Labyrinth of Minos—*Continued*

Some tablets relate to ceramic vessels of various forms, many of them containing marks indicative of their contents. Others, still more interesting, show vases of metallic forms, and obviously relate to the royal treasures. It is a highly significant fact that the most characteristic of these, such as a beaker like the famous gold cups found in the Vapheio tomb near Sparta, a high-spouted ewer and an object, perhaps representing a certain weight of metal, in the form of an ox's head, recur—together with the ingots with incurving sides among the gold offerings in the hands of the tributary Ægean princes—on Egyptian monuments of Thothmes III's time. These tributary chieftains, described as Kefts and people of the sea, who have been already recognized as the representatives of the Mycenean culture, recall in their dress and other particulars the Cretan youths, such as the cupbearer above described, who take part in the processional scenes on the palace frescoes. The appearance in the records of the royal treasury at Knossos of vessels of the same form as those offered by them to Pharaoh is itself a valuable indication that some of these clay archives approximately go back to the same period—in other words, to the beginning of the fifteenth century B. C. . . .

The Sacred Writing

The signs already mentioned as engraved on the great gypsum blocks of the palace must be regarded as distinct from the script proper. These blocks go back to the earliest period of the building, and the symbols on them, which are of very limited selection, but of constant recurrence, seem to have had a religious significance. The most constantly recurring of these, indeed, is the labrys or double ax already referred to—the special symbol of the Cretan Zeus, votive deposits of which in bronze have been found in the cave sanctuaries of the god on Mount Ida and Mount Dicta. The double ax is engraved on the principal blocks, such as the corner stones and door jambs throughout the building, and recurs as a sign of dedication on every side of every block of a sacred pillar that forms the center of what seems to have been the inmost shrine of an aniconic cult connected with this indigenous divinity.

The "house of Minos" thus turns out to be also the house of the double ax—the labrys and its lord—in other words, it is the true Labyrinthos. The divine inspirer of Minos was not less the lord of the bull, and it is certainly no accidental coincidence that huge figures of bulls in painting and plaster occupied conspicuous positions within it. Nay, more, on a small steatite relief, a couchant bull is seen above the doorway of a building probably intended to represent the palace, and this would connect it in the most direct way with the sacred animal of the Cretan Zeus.

There can be little remaining doubt that this vast edifice, which in a broad historic sense we are justified in calling the "palace of Minos," is one and the same as the traditional "labyrinth."

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