NATURE RAMBLINGS

By Frank Thone

Lesser Trees

ONE of the things that proves most striking to the traveller in the tropics who gets into the real forests of those lands of the sun—not the tangled thickets on river-banks or clearing-edges—is the emptiness of the spaces between the trees. Their huge trunks rise like pillars in a cathedral to heights of a hundred feet or more, and support a canopy of interlaced tops so dense that beneath it a perpetual twilight reigns. The ground beneath is naked of ferns and herbs, and there is no underbrush, no growth of small trees. All the leafage is concentrated up there at the top, competing fiercely for the favors of the ardent sun.

It is different in the broad-leafed forests of the temperate zones. Here the canopy is not so thick, some light filters through, and there is a succession of layers of vegetation. On the ground a mat of moss, above that a stratum of ferns and wildflowers, then lesser and greater shrubs, and finally a family of trees that are content always to remain of secondary height. It is a kindlier forest; the leaves condescend to the man on foot, and do not remain altogether aloof in the gleaming courts of the sun as they do in the tropics.

These lesser trees—hop hornbeam, ironwood, bladdernut, water beech, and a number of others—are worthy of more attention and cultivation by the average householder than they have received in the past. They are for the most part hardy, they are interesting in leaf and fruit, and most important of all they do not grow too big for the ordinary small city or suburban lawn. A few elms or oaks or maples may easily make an ordinary lot too crowded after a few years because they have an embarrassing habit of growing too big.

Forestry

Science News-Letter, August 30, 1930

Reproduce Famous Baths in Home Tub

Medicine

THE BENEFICIAL baths of a famous German watering place may now be had in the home by means of a simple apparatus called a bubble or foam distributor. The method of using this apparatus and its advantages were reported to the *Lancet,* an English medical journal, by L. Shillito of the electrotherapy department of St. Thomas's Hospital in London.

The natural baths, of warm effervescing water, have been very successful in the treatment of heart disease. Because of the expense of the visit to Nauheim, however, many have been deprived of the help the baths give. With the new device, the patient may have them in his own bathtub at home.

The main physiological effects of the baths are due to the temperature of the water and to the carbon dioxide it contains. This gas has an effect on the blood circulation. The carbon dioxide bath is said to be the only physical method of treatment in which the heart muscle is trained without at the same time increasing the pulse rate.

"By a gradual increase of the carbon dioxide content and a reduction of the temperature of the bath, the heart can gradually be forced to do more work, and through this increasing exercise its musculature becomes strengthened, the tone increased and reserve power augmented. The sensation of warmth produced by the strong circulatory reaction allows a lower temperature to be tolerated without shivering," Mr. Shillito said.

The health continues to improve for some months after a course of these baths. This is probably due to a slow and gradual process of repair in degenerated organs which have for the first time, possibly, in years been provided with a more healthy circulation of blood.

Science News-Letter, August 30, 1930

Deformed Indian

THE ELABORATE burial of a prehistoric Indian leader who suffered the uncomfortable distinction of a deforming bone disease has been discovered by the University of Chicago field party excavating near Lewiston, Ill., under the direction of Dr. Fay-Cooper Cole, professor of anthropology at the university.

The Indian, who was only about 35 years old when he died, was terribly deformed by the inroads of osteitis fibrosa, an inflammatory malady of the bone, Dr. Cole stated to the SCIENCE NEWS-LETTER. Dr. Cole suggests that this very deformity may have set the young Indian apart as a man of distinction in the eyes of his fellows. His burial, which was given signal attention, bespeaks the honors paid to a chief or medicine man.

"At his head, probably in his hair, was a long bone pin," Dr. Cole explained. "At each ear was an imitation wolf tooth pendant made of shell; at each arm a real wolf tooth perforated; about his neck a strand of 500 shell beads; at one elbow an effigy pipe, discoidal stone, and a stone blade; at the other arm five stone blades; while beside one leg was a beautifully made discoidal stone."

The prehistoric Indian burial is one of sixty which the expedition has unearthed in a single mound on the estate of Joy Morton, of Chicago.

Archaeology

Science News-Letter, August 30, 1930