

ETHNOLOGY

Civilization Forces Indians' Return to Tribal Habits

CIVILIZATION has often tried to force the Indian into living the white man's way. Now, in Owens Valley, California, civilization is forcing the desert Indians to retreat into the sort of existence that their tribal ancestors knew. Tiny seeds, insects, and worms are the foods to which the natives are returning. Native crafts are being revived.

The reason for the change is that practically all of the Los Angeles water supply comes from this isolated Owens Valley, and in order to make the city's water supply secure, it has become necessary to purchase all the privately owned land in the valley. Not only is Los Angeles buying farms, but entire towns. The Valley is being turned back to its native desert state.

The Indians have made a living for years working for the white people. Soon, there will be no more farms or towns and few white inhabitants. But the Indians are not leaving along with the whites. They are part of the desert country, and could no more transplant themselves than could the pinon trees and the sage brush.

"We no leave," declared old "Cripple Hand" George and his wife Susie. "Our people here long time before white people come. Stay long time after white people go. We get same food our grandfathers did."

The Valley Indians are known locally as Paiutes and to scientists as Eastern Mono. Comparatively little is known of their past, but it would appear that they have lived in eastern California for many centuries.

Food such as white men are accustomed to eat is scarce in the arid country. In the old days, the Paiutes were forced to use a variety of seemingly impractical foods, such as pine nuts, tediously ground in stone mortars; small tubers pulled from the ground by hand; very small wild grass seeds, thousands of which were required for one meal; peyahgis, a kind of fat, succulent worm gathered from the pine trees; and other insects and even reptiles. These same ancient foods are being eaten increasingly as white civilization recedes from Owens Valley.

Not only native foods but also native arts and crafts are being developed again by Owens Valley Indians. Women of the tribe have long been known for their fine technique in manufacture of willow baskets and now this skill is utilized as never before. Thousands of tourists go through Owens Valley every summer on their way to the High Sierra and the Indians are finding the tourists good customers.

The Paiutes also make good rabbit skin blankets which command a high price. Men of the tribe are learning the songs and dances of their fathers, the public demonstrations of which bring them many dollars from these same tourists.

In view of conditions, scientists are hopeful that here in the Owens Valley will be preserved for posterity a living laboratory where the traditions and customs of the original native Californians may be studied.

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MODERNISTIC IDOL

A grotesque little human figure carved a century ago, and yet it exhibits a remarkably modernistic tendency. Indians living in southern Illinois made this idol out of fluorite. It is said to indicate the high development of ancient art. The idol is one foot tall and weighs 42 pounds, and answers to the name of "Perrin Image."

PHYSICS

Color Music Made Directly From Sound of Instruments

IRREGULAR SHAPES of red, green, blue and white light flashed and twisted on a screen here in time with orchestral music as Edward B. Patterson, R. C. A. Victor engineer, gave his first public demonstration of a new method of color music.

His apparatus seems to have solved many of the technical problems involved. It is the first in which the color is actually operated by sound. Previous experimental machines have operated the color instruments entirely separately from sound instruments.

One of the most recent members of the ever-increasing family of vacuum tubes—the thyatron—is at the heart of the Patterson apparatus. With this device a very minute change in electrical current is able to control the flow of a much larger power.

The input is in the form of a small electrical current which may come from a microphone picking up the sound waves from an actual musician or orchestra, or it may come direct from the electrical pickup of a phonograph. In the latter case, as demonstrated in Philadelphia, a loud speaker can also be connected in the circuit, to give the sound along with the color.

The input is passed through a group of four wave filters, each picking out a band of vibrations. One passes only the low notes, another those a little higher, a third those still higher pitched, and a fourth the shrill notes. The currents from these filters are further amplified and then operate the thyatron tubes, which in turn operate colored lamps, one for each band of waves.

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