AGRICULTURE

Science Hailed as Saving World From Starvation

SCIENCE has saved the world from starvation. The demand for food supplies since the beginning of the present century has been such that without the aid of the engineer, the chemist, the geneticist and other trained workers, international want would be faced today.

In an address before the hundredth anniversary meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science this week, Sir E. John Russell, internationally known agricultural scientist, reviewed the salient events in England's agricultural history and pointed to the contributions of science to world agriculture. Specially-bred varieties of wheat, he stated, had made possible the profitable cultivation in Canada of countless idle acres. The development of the reaper binder and internal combustion engine were named as engineering achievements that had resulted in greater output and increased wealth.

Study of plant and animal diseases in South Africa has rendered a vast area safe and productive, Sir John continued, and the application of soil chemistry has been of universal benefit. Bacteriologists and refrigerating engineers made possible the important dairy and meat products industries of Australia and New Zealand, he said. Irrigation in India was pointed out as a science contribution which was an unmixed blessing.

"Modern science, in short," Sir John said, "has been so successful in increasing man's power over Nature that it has brought us harvests far more bountiful than we know what to do with. Science is still advancing, and no one can tell what it will achieve next."

Further achievement was necessary, he continued, commenting on the destruction of crops and livestock by invisible causal agents, the filterable viruses.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Downtown Mexico City Yields Ancient Relics

AZTEC stone sculptures, pottery vessels, and human skeletons have just been unearthed in a spot in Mexico City comparable to Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street in New York. The remains were found by workmen excavating for the foundations of a new business building at San Juan de Letran Street and Juarez Avenue.

Practically across the street in other times were found ornaments of gold and a variety of objects. It is the spot, where on the "Sad Night" of July 1, 1520, the fleeing Spaniards, burdened with Indian treasure, were attacked by the Aztecs, according to historical researches made some years ago by Dr. Manuel Gamio, well-known Mexican anthropologist. This was one of the boundaries of the ancient city in the lake.

Tenochtitlan, as Mexico City then was called, was an American Venice built in a lake, with causeways leading to land, and many canals. When the Spaniards fled, each of the soldiers took as much gold as he could, but many of them fell into the lake with their booty and never came out.

Measurements of the skeletons just found may reveal whether they were Spanish or Aztec soldiers. Mexican Government archaeologists, under the direction of José Reygadas Vértiz, take charge of such excavations where remains are found by accident.

The whereabouts of the "treasure of Montezuma" has never failed to intrigue the curious and romantic. Some guessed the Aztecs had recovered it and carried it away, forgetting at last the hiding place. Many searches have been organized, and even American stock companies have been formed in the past to find the treasure. In fact, Mexican treasure of various origins has been the motive of numerous searches.

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MEDICINE

Find Skin Has no Disinfecting Power

THE SKIN does not have the power of disinfecting itself or of killing microbes that get on it, John F. Norton and Marguerite F. Novy of the Detroit Department of Health have reported to the American Public Health Association.

One group of scientists, Dr. Lloyd L. Arnold and associates of the Illinois State Department of Health, have reported experiments showing that the skin did have this disinfecting power. The Detroit investigators were unable to find any evidence of inherent germ-killing properties of the skin. Microbes that had been left on the skin for about ten minutes did lose their ability to live, but if the skin was kept moist, only a few of them died. Apparently it was the drying effect of being left on the skin that killed the germs, and not the skin itself. Filter paper, glass slides, tanned hides and other materials produced the same effect as the dry skin.

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