

TUTENKHAMON'S CLOCK

This clock bearing Pharaoh Tutenkhamon's inscription showing that he made it with his own hands is now in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, through whose courtesy the photograph is used.

Egyptians began the day at dawn, and this practice was used in Europe as late as the Middle Ages. Introduction of the striking clock, fourteenth century, shifted the beginning of day to midnight.

Egyptians early divided the day into 12 parts for convenience, but were not concerned that the parts be of equal length. As late as the Middle Ages in Europe, hours were of varying length—longer in winter nights, shorter in winter days, and vice versa in summer.

In early Christian centuries, Egyptians divided the hours into halves, quarters and eighths. The modern division into 60 minutes made of 60 seconds is no older than about 1000 A.D.

Primitive men and women today, lacking time pieces, use such phrases as "a rice-cooking" to mean about half an hour, or "the frying of a locust" to mean about a minute.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Engineers Find Aztec Lady of Lake in Mexico

AN AZTEC water goddess, once the proud lady of the lake which surrounded Mexico City in Aztec days, has been found in the dried lake bed by Mexican engineers.

All that remains of the glory of the "blue skirted one" is her figure made of painted clay and a quantity of Aztec pottery and ornaments. The goddess' shrine, which once rose out of shallow Lake Texcoco, went the way of other pagan Indian shrines when Spanish conquerors advanced on the Aztec capital.

Archaeologists of the National Museum in Mexico City, informed of the discovery, have investigated the site. From old maps they calculate that the water goddess' shrine stood near the lake shore camp of the Spaniards in 1520. Here the Spaniards built brigantines for a second attempt on Mexico City following their initial failure there.

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EPIDEMIOLOGY

Colds Are Caused by Germ; Weather Can't Bring Them On

NO MATTER how much cold and rainy weather a person is exposed to, the individual will not catch a cold unless he is infected by a cold germ caught from another individual, Prof. Wilson G. Smillie of the Harvard University School of Public Health revealed.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Associated Harvard Clubs, Prof. Smillie described four Harvard expeditions to isolated communities for the purpose of studying the common cold.

The investigations were conducted at Stevenson's "Treasure Island," which is St. John's in the Virgin Islands, at a Hudson Bay trading post on the Northwest river in Labrador, at Spitsbergen, the northernmost permanent settlement in the world, and at Happy Hollow on the Patsiliga river in southern Alabama.

Prof. Smillie also revealed that a person with a cold is only infectious for three days, even though he may be coughing and have a temperature after that time.

Summarizing the conclusions of the expeditions in his address, Prof. Smillie said:

"Common colds are an infection and are not due to cold weather. Many people think that colds are due to cold weather but this is not so. In Spitsbergen we found that the people were subjected to intensely cold weather and terrific winds all winter without catching cold; but as soon as the boats came in the spring and carriers of cold germs arrived, most of the people in Spitsbergen caught colds.

"On Stevenson's 'Treasure Island' in the tropics, which had a population of 746 when we were there, we found an almost perfect paradise as far as weather and environmental conditions are concerned. The people there also caught colds, but not as long as they were isolated from contact with carriers of cold germs.

"At the trading post in Labrador we found that the people did not have any colds all winter until a mailman arrived

and brought the cold germs in. Then colds spread to the whole community.

"So we proved that colds are infectious. A person with a cold is infectious, however, only for the first three days. The person may be coughing and have a temperature after three days, but he is not infectious any more."

Explaining the conduct of the investigations in field laboratories, Prof. Smillie said that a study of the causes and spread of colds in modern community life would have been unsatisfactory, since our life is so complex, our contacts so frequent and our environmental influences so varied.

"We attempted to simplify our studies by the establishment of field laboratories in these various isolated communities where human contacts are infrequent, life is simple and environmental factors measurable," he said.

Prof. Smillie led all of Harvard's cold studying expeditions except the one to Spitsbergen which was led by Dr. Harland Paul who has since joined the Rockefeller Foundation. The expeditions have been conducted at intervals since 1927.

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CHEMISTRY

2,000 Tons Per Month of Potash From Dead Sea

POTASH from the waters of the Dead Sea, in Palestine, has now reached a production rate of between 2,000 and 3,000 tons a month. The initial rate, only two years ago, was not more than 1,000 tons a month.

The principal by-product of the potash industry is bromine, which now equals 74 per cent. of the total British requirement for this chemical. Other by-products in economic prospects are potassium sulphate and calcium sulphate, both meeting fertilizer needs of Palestinian soils. (*Die Umschau*, March 17)

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