

ferred. Bits of cancer in a test tube were destroyed when heated to 111.4 degrees Fahrenheit, Dr. Walker found. When he tried raising the temperature of the cancerous animals to the same high point, the tumors were destroyed but the animals were unable to live more than a few hours after the treatment.

When this method failed as a cure for the cancer, Dr. Walker tried raising the temperature of the cancerous rats to the highest point at which they could live. This was 109 degrees Fahrenheit. While thirty minutes of this high temperature did not injure the animals, it had no effect on the cancer and the animals finally died of the disease.

*Science News Letter, November 2, 1935*

## FORESTRY

## More Forest Fires But Smaller Area Was Burned

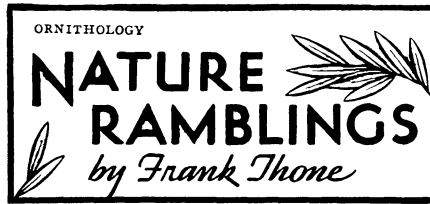
**F**OREST fires, raging in the Los Angeles region and menacing elsewhere, might have been far worse this fall if the woods had not been full of C.C.C. workers. Latest figures available at the U. S. Forest Service show that forest fires this fall in National Forests, over the country as a whole, have numbered 9,512, as against a preceding five-year average of 7,601—an increase of about twelve per cent. But the total area burned this year has been only 192,040 acres, as against a five-year average of 417,603 acres—a decrease of well over one-half.

Forest Service officials give full credit to the C.C.C. workers for this creditable showing in reduction of loss. In the first place, armies of fire-fighters stand "at the ready" all the time, so that counter-attack against the flames is much more prompt than it used to be. But more basic and permanent has been the work of the C.C.C. in building fire roads, clearing fire breaks, cleaning up accumulations of slash, snags and other forest-fire bait.

A factor in the increase of forest fires, at least in numbers, is the continually growing army of people entering the National Forests, especially recreation-seekers. The number of man-caused fires in the National Forests this season was 5,506 as compared with the five-year average of 4,359 for the 1931-34 period.

Taken by regions, the Forest Service summary of the situation is: Southern California, hazardous; Northeast Atlantic states, medium hazardous; parts of the South, medium to highly hazardous; elsewhere, generally favorable.

*Science News Letter, November 2, 1935*



### Athena's Companions

**O**WLS are the subject of folklore and even of religious awe in all places, and have been so at all times; from the cultured Greeks who honored Athena to the Aztec subjects of Montezuma, down to our own owlish pranks of Hallowe'en time.

In most mythologies, the owl has been the companion of the gods of night or death. Naturally enough, too; most owls fly by night, are preternaturally silent except when they choose to give vent to blood-chilling hoots and quavers, and all of them are birds of prey, who can live only if they kill. Our own association of owls with witches goes back to the old priesthoods of forgotten gods of gloomy North European forests.

Perhaps the most famous of all the owl-favoring deities was Athena, or Minerva as the Latins called her. She was anything but a gloomy goddess, and has for ages been the very pattern of the calm, highly intelligent woman who deliberately chooses spinsterhood that she may be the more free to pursue a career of good works. Yet Athena always had an owl about the premises.

More than that: in the earliest days of her career, long before there was an Athens, Athena apparently *was* an owl herself; or at least a woman with an owl's head. In the ruins of Troy, when they were excavated by the famous German archaeologist Schliemann fifty years ago, there were found no end of vases, urns, and other objects of metal and pottery, in which an owl's head on a woman's body were represented.

It seems to have been a case of one of those deities, common enough in the East, in which admired superior qualities in an animal were linked with a super-human mentality, and a sculptor's effort made to symbolize in a visible, tangible way the combined concept.

But the Greeks, who arose as a culture-group long after their predecessors the Achaeans had destroyed Troy, had no taste for such "therocephalic" gods. They plucked the composite proto-Athena apart, made a superb woman out of the queer Asiatic hybrid, and transformed the grotesque owl-mask into a decently respectable normal bird on her shoulder or at her feet.

*Science News Letter, November 2, 1935*

## BOTANY

## Monotropa's Waxed Beauty Feeds on Damp Decay

See Front Cover

**I**NDIAN Pipe, or Monotropa, a flowering plant that feeds saprophytically like a mushroom on dead and decaying plant remains, is a frequent find in moist autumn woods. The clump pictured on the cover of this issue of the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is described by the photographer, Miss Mary L. Didlake of the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, as "the largest clump I have ever seen, at least 75 separate stems. They were pink, lovely and translucent, only the tips of the bells being white."

*Science News Letter, November 2, 1935*

## GEOGRAPHY

## Threatened

● "The night of April 9, at half-past one, we were awakened by severe shocks. We dressed rapidly, and the whole camp was on its feet in a few minutes. At the spot where the day before the cookhouse had stood there was now a gigantic ridge of packed floes. This was moving with a great clatter and thunder, and steadily advancing on the tents. The whole camp was threatened with destruction. The ice-field on which the barrack-hut stood was crushing down on the floe which sheltered the remainder of the camp.

"We left one on duty at each tent ready for emergency evacuation, and the rest of us set to work. We had to help the barrack-hut dwellers, who were on the other side of the creaking and crashing barrier. The barrier was menacing the tents, threatening to crash down on them. The uninhabitable part of the barrack-hut, which had been torn away, was already buried beneath masses of rearing ice. Cases of matches, of which we had ample, fell between the crushing floes, and were ground up and flared up like torches."—Yakov Yakovlevitch Hakkel in *THE VOYAGE OF THE CHELYUSKIN* by Members of the Expedition (*Macmillan*).

*Science News Letter, November 2, 1935*