

Freak Roosters—*Cont'd* New Yellowstone Theory

Geology

only outcry one hears from it arises at feeding time if its crushed grain is not promptly forthcoming. Mice and rats and guinea pigs and even dogs in the laboratories seem to have the same indifference to what has happened or yet may happen, and they are thereby able to recover in hours—or even minutes—from operations that would put the more imaginative human species into the convalescent ward for days or weeks. It is perhaps fortunate for them that this is so, for animals in nature, and even in domestication, are called upon very often to endure and recover from injuries compared with which the most radical laboratory experiments are mere fleabites. It is not fashionable any longer to speak as our grandfathers spoke, of “the marvellous provisions of Nature”; but this state of affairs certainly looks like something of the sort.

In the meantime, undisturbed by philosophical speculations over the indifference of his chicks to what happens to them, Mr. Kozelka carries on. His experiments still have a long course to run, but enough has been done already to give a good glimpse of daylight. Tissue transplants from place to place on the same animal are practicable, even relatively easy. Taken from one animal and put on another they are not so easy, though they can still be made in a fair proportion of tries, and at least a part of them will survive the attempts of the “native” tissues to absorb and displace them. These things are now being weighed and evaluated by physiologists and watched by surgeons; tomorrow may see the beginnings of their application to our own needs.

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If one common housefly and all his descendants flourished, the family would number 1,096,181,249,320,720,000,000,000,000 by the end of the season.

Chinchilla rabbits, which are becoming popular as fur animals, must be bred for both fur and food if they are to be profitable, government experts warn.

Triplets occur in families about once in 6,000 births.

A new history of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone will need to be written as a result of geological research by members of the Princeton Summer School of Geology and Natural Resources who have just completed an investigation of the canyon and the area bordering this great natural ditch.

When the first transcontinental expedition of Princeton geologists, traveling in the special geological Pullman “Princeton”, as well as students, visited Yellowstone Park in 1926 they obtained the first hints that the origin and history of the canyon needed reexamination and possible revision. This year the area was restudied by the geologists under the leadership of Prof. R. M. Field, director of the expedition, and Prof. O. T. Jones of the University of Manchester, England, one of the foreign guests.

During the Tertiary period, the age of mammals, some tens of millions of years ago, the geologists concluded, a canyon of nearly the present dimensions was excavated. This great waterworn depression was later blocked by volcanic lavas near its lower end and filled to the brim with sediments. The present canyon from the upper falls of the Yellowstone to the lower end was largely reexcavated only a few millions of years ago. The digging of the new canyon by the river's water has taken place since the great Glacial epoch, when ice covered much of America.

“One of the most striking conclusions resulting from this discovery,” Prof. Field declared today, “is the fact that the lower fall of the Yellowstone has occupied its present position since the later Tertiary period when the first excavation of the canyon was made.”

Profs. Field and Jones will publish further details of their discoveries in the fall after the return of the expedition which is now enroute to the Pacific coast. The new information obtained suggests to these experts that the stratigraphy and petrography of this frequently visited region needs revision upon the maps and in the geological records.

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In a survey of state prisons in Kentucky it was found that almost one-third of the male prisoners had dependent children under 16 years old at the time they were sentenced.

NATURE RAMBLINGS

BY FRANK THONE

Natural History



Wild Cherries

Last spring the wild cherry trees helped to make the countryside glad with bloom; now their small dark red or black fruits are giving the summer an adornment proper to its more sultry beauty. Most species of wild cherry bear their fruits singly or in small clusters, as do the cultivated varieties, but the black cherry, which is perhaps the most widespread and abundant member of the genus, offers them on long strings or racemes. The trees are usually very prolific too, so that in late July and August there is almost as much of black on their twigs as there is of green. The fruits of the wild cherry, like most wild fruits, are not palatable to tastes trained on the milder products of cultivated orchards. They have too much “pucker” in them, due to their high tannin content, and their acidity is usually rather high as well. But a few of them, added judiciously to preserves or marmalade, will give a tang and spice that many persons like.

And whether or not supercilious man condescends to harvest these free-will offerings of nature, the birds at least do not despise them. A wild cherry tree is a banquet table for many feathered species. In return for the feast, the tree collects free transportation for its seeds. These latter, being hard and indigestible, pass uninjured through the digestive tracts of their devourers, and may be dropped hundreds of yards, or even several miles from the place of their origin. Thus it comes to pass that in the wild thickets that spring up in clearings or burned places in the woods, and in the similar growth that rises wherever there is a fence for the birds to perch on, there are always some wild cherry trees.

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