Earthquake Waves Clocked

➤ EARTHQUAKE waves can travel along the surface of the earth at more than cannonball speeds, a paper by Ralph R. Bodle of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey disclosed. Just before the war broke out, a special seismograph was installed at St. Georges, Bermuda, to catch crustal waves moving over the bottom of the Atlantic and measure their speed. Velocities of such waves, measured not only at this station but at one in Norway, averaged about 4.5 kilometers (2.79 miles) per second.

Science News Letter, May 1, 1943

Mississippi's Flow Data

➤ DURING the century from 1839 to 1938, the Ohio river poured approximately 280,000 cubic feet of water into the Mississippi River every second. In the same period the mean flow of the Mississippi, just below the junction of the Red River, was about 635,000 cubic feet per second. These figures were presented by Dr. Clarence S. Jarvis of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service. The data are taken from government records.

"Fortunately for the science of hydrology, and for all to which it relates, the rainfall, temperature, and other climatological data, including daily river stages and daily forecasts, had become entrenched as essential parts of the U. S. Weather Bureau records," Dr. Jarvis stated.

Science News Letter, May 1, 1943

Recorder for Wind Data

➤ A PHOTOGRAPHIC recorder used to replace previous methods of obtaining a series of wind velocity measurements was described at the meeting by Dr. Leonard B. Corwin of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service.

Dr. Corwin stated that the recorder was developed to secure simultaneous measurements of wind velocity at several different levels where electrical power was unavailable. The dials or faces of several counters were photographed as the simplest and surest way to obtain multiple records. By adjustments, photographic observations could be obtained at intervals of one minute up to an hour or more.

Dr. Corwin stated that the photographic recorder "appears to offer a means of obtaining an autographic record of many if not most meteorologic and climatic values." Further simplification of the apparatus is contemplated.

Science News Letter, May 1, 1943

MEDICINE

Fish Oils May Be Source Of Blood Pressure Remedy

➤ COD LIVER OIL and other fish oils may prove to be a source of a high blood pressure remedy, it appears from a report by Dr. Arthur Grollman and Dr. T. R. Harrison, of the Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest College, to the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine. (*Proceedings,* March)

Fish body and liver oils, they discovered, contain a substance which is effective in reducing high blood pressure in rats. The substance is not the same as vitamin A, which is contained in fish liver oils and which some scientists have believed has a blood-pressure reducing effect. It is, however, similar to the kidney extract hailed a few years ago as a potential remedy for high blood pressure.

Both the kidney extract and the fish oil substance can be given by mouth. Both reduce the blood pressure slowly and have a relatively prolonged effect compared to other substances that reduce high blood pressure.

The blood-pressure reducing substance, however, is present in only small amounts in animal kidneys. Fish oils, on the other hand, are relatively potent in reducing blood pressures and are readily available. Therefore, in the opinion of the investigators, they "offer greater promise than kidneys" as a source of a blood pressure remedy.

Further experiments are in progress to learn the nature of the substance in fish oils which reduces high blood pressure in rats.

Science News Letter, May 1, 1943

Sugar-beet farmers are advised to plant a new variety of *potato* named Pawnee because it matures and can be dug before the beets are ready to harvest.

The U. S. Bureau of Mines has undertaken a greatly expanded search for bauxite, alunite, and aluminous clays to make the country independent of imported bauxite for *aluminum.*

Tight oak or gumwood *barrels* may be used for the transportation of cottonseed and linseed oil, soap, lubricants, and strong alcohol, if coated internally with a solution of sodium silicate.

ANTHROPOLOGY

NATURE RAMBLINGS by Frank Thone

The Merry Month

➤ EASTER, just past, has a few very ancient, pre-Christian practices lurking behind its orthodox ecclesiastical decorations and observances (See *SNL,* April 24). Many persons praise as wise the traditional policy of the Church, of not attempting to suppress all heathen observances by a converted people, but permitting the retention of those that are innocent or unobjectionable. Thus, relics of the old equinoxial, seed-time festivals survive in Easter customs—rather badly dislocated in time this year because of the unusual lateness of Easter.

The new religion writes a thinner palimpsest-script over the old in May Day celebrations. For one thing, there is no important Church feast-day on May 1, so that observance of the day can be much more frankly secular.

May Day is what even its attenuated modern form indicates, primarily a flower-time feast, as the pagan festival supplanted by Easter was a seed-time celebration. It marks the advance of the year, the growing of hopes for a good harvest of fruit from the blossoming boughs, of grain from the soil that has sent forth bright promises in the form of violets and anemones and buttercups.

Nowadays May Day is almost altogether a children's holiday, except where colleges and girls' schools choose and crown their May Queens. However, this enthronement for a day of the prettiest young woman in the community isn't merely a momentary stretching-out of childhood; it is actually a closer approach to the original form of the old festival. For May (as young people don't need to be told) is a time for romance and love-making, and the Queen of May was the village's living image of the