

ARCHAEOLOGY

New Ancient Man

From 25 fragments of fossilized bones, a skull of Saldanha Man has been pieced together. This forerunner of modern man made and used crude hand-axes.

► **DISCOVERY OF** a new kind of ancient man reported from Cape Town, South Africa, is being discussed by anthropologists as they readjust to the Piltdown Man hoax. (See SNL, Nov. 28, p. 350.)

Although a number of remains of man's ancestors have been found in the past in Africa, it is not until now that human bones of great antiquity have been located in the Cape of Good Hope region.

It was by painstakingly piecing together 25 fragments of fossilized bone that scientists rebuilt the skull of this primitive forerunner of modern man to whom they gave the name Saldanha Man.

Saldanha Man was a beetle-browed individual with a strikingly sloping forehead, thick skull and low cranial vault.

Indications from the attachments of the muscles of the nape of the neck are that he did not walk erect, but had the crouching posture of Neanderthal man. He had less brain matter in his skull than either Rho-

desian Man or most Neanderthals. However, he was capable of making and using the crude hand-axe, examples of which were found strewn about near the skull bones.

The human bones, along with those of a variety of long-extinct animals were found scattered over an area of several thousand acres on the west coast of Africa about 80 miles due north of Cape Town.

Strong winds had whipped over the arid land, scouring out troughs and valleys, winnowing out the fossils and stone tools, and driving the sand northwards in vast moving sand dunes.

Among the extinct animal bones were those of a giant-horned buffalo and a giant warthog with teeth greatly exceeding in size those of any living forms of that animal. The African mammoth is well represented among the bones, and there is one set of teeth of a rare primitive giraffe.

The bones of Saldanha Man were collected by Keith Jolly, field officer for the

expedition from the University of Cape Town investigating the site.

Details of the find were reported in *Nature* (Oct. 31) by Prof. M. R. Drennan of the University of Cape Town. The ancient forerunner of modern man received his name from the almost landlocked bay on the borders of which the bones were found, Saldanha Bay.

The finds were declared "better preserved and more complete than any other Stone Age site in South Africa."

Science News Letter, December 5, 1953

ARCHAEOLOGY

Africa Got Corn From America Before 1000 A.D.

► **NEGRO AND** Arab peoples in Africa had contacts with the Americas at least 500 years before Columbus, Prof. M. D. W. Jeffreys, of the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, reports in *Nature* (Nov. 21).

He cites as evidence a find of pottery in the Yoruba territory of Nigeria decorated with a design made by rolling a corn cob over wet clay. Prof. Jeffreys dates this pottery, discovered by A. J. H. Goodwin, as having been made around the year 1000.

Most historians of corn and archaeologists are agreed that corn is native to the Western Hemisphere. Prior to this report there has not been evidence to show that corn was in Europe or Africa before Columbus' discovery of America and corn.

Prof. Jeffreys also reports that an analysis of the language of tribes in West Africa shows that the word for corn or maize, in European terminology, came from the north and east, the general direction of Arab tribes. He points out that if corn had been introduced by the Portuguese on the coast this would not be true.

"My researches over the past seven years have now accumulated sufficient data to establish Arab-Negro contacts with the Americas beginning about A.D. 900," he concludes.

Science News Letter, December 5, 1953

BIOLOGY

Highest Flying Monkeys at Zoo

► **THE HIGHEST** flying monkeys on earth are at home in the National Zoological Park in Washington, gifts to the zoo from the U. S. Air Force.

In September, 1952, the two monkeys, Philippine macaques, were sent aloft 200,000 feet in an Aerobee rocket from White Sands, N. Mex. Under study since then at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, the monkeys have showed no ill effects from their extraordinary journey.

Dr. William Mann, director of the zoo, has given them a cage to themselves as stellar attractions.

They are the first monkeys to have returned safely from such heights.

Science News Letter, December 5, 1953



HIGH FLYING MONKEYS—*The first two monkeys to return safely from an Aerobee rocket flight 200,000 feet above the ground, now residents at the National Zoological Park in Washington, are shown here. The Philippine macaques were sent aloft as part of a program to determine the effects of upper air flights on animals, and thus infer how humans might react under such conditions.*