Picture Rock Mystery Solved

Archæology

Dighton Rock, which has been one of the pet mysteries from prehistoric America since 1680, has been explained in reasonable fashion by a professor of psychology, Dr. Edmund B. Delabarre, of Brown University.

The pictures carved on the surface of this gray boulder in Massachusetts gained fame when the Rev. Cotton Mather included the rock in his book on the wonderful works of God. Since then, the rock has done multiple duty, bolstering up theories that the eastern coast of America was visited by the Phoenicians, the lost tribes of Israel, the Chinese, the Druids, the inhabitants of the traditional lost continent of Atlantis.

In a thorough investigation of the subject, just published in book form, Dr. Delabarre explains that by photographing the rock with flashlight, he revealed beneath the childish pictures and signs traces of the name Miguel Cortereal and the date 1511. Miguel and Gaspar Cortereal were two Portuguese brothers. Gaspar had sailed to Labrador and Newfoundland in 1501, and failed to return. In 1502 Miguel set out to find him, but was never heard of again. If Dr. Delabarre's interpretation of the badly worn Roman lettering is correct, Miguel reached New England and survived there among the Indians for at least ten years. It also means that the scrawly picture writing on the rock was, for the most part, at least, cut into it at a later time, and thus must be Indian in origin, except for two other records by white men which seem to have been carved in 1592 and again about 1640.

Dr. Delabarre has studied other inscribed rocks about Narragansett Bay and elsewhere in New England and believes that the work was done by Indians in Colonial times and supports his conclusion that the Indian practice was suggested by their contact with the invading culture of Europeans.

One difficulty encountered by those who would study Dighton Rock has always been its inconvenient location. It is at the edge of a river, and is exposed by tides for only brief periods. Another difficulty, pointed out by Dr. Delabarre, is that the irregularities of the rock surface from wear and tear blend with the carved pictures to the confusion of the student who would sort out the man-made mark from the markings of nature. Only a few of the pictographs are unmistakable, and the psychologist states that "it is evident that no two persons who study the surface and even no single person who studies it at different times can agree about what is there."

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Canary Birds Aid Scientists

Hygiene

Little yellow canary birds can serve mankind in another way than with their singing. For ten years they have been subjects of experiment by scientists at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health. Birds as well as men as subject to malaria. So the scientists have been able to discover many important facts about the disease by studying it in birds. The results of the ten-year-old study carried on by himself and associates at the Johns Hopkins University will be reported by Dr. Robert Hegner in the forthcoming issue of the *Quarterly Review of Biology*.

From canary bird studies, the scientists found that the parasites causing malaria exist almost entirely in the red cells of the blood. They were able to determine the exact number of parasites in a given quantity of blood at various stages of the disease. Feeding sugar to the bird, the scientists found, favors the development and growth of the parasites, while injecting insulin and thus decreasing the amount of sugar in the blood, is unfavorable for the parasite hence favorable for the bird.

These scientists found the exact relation between the stage of development of the parasites and the stage of the illness. They found how various factors in the sick individual affect the development and growth of the parasites, or how the individual resists the disease. From many discoveries of this sort, made by studying malaria in the canary birds, the scientists hope to gain further control over the disease in both birds and human beings.

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Mice Have Disease Carriers

Medicine

Carriers of dangerous typhoid-like germs that scurry through the darkness of the night, unchecked by the careful health regulations that surround the human carriers, are suggested by the researches of Dr. Sara E. Branham of the U. S. Hygienic Laboratory of the Public Service here.

Many human diseases have close counterparts among animals. Among such diseases are those of the intestinal group related to typhoid fever. Scientists have now found that there may be animal as well as human carriers of these diseases, which may account for some otherwise unexplainable outbreaks.

A carrier has recovered from the disease but still harbors in its system the germs, ready to spread infection among others.

White mice particularly were found by Dr. Branham to be carriers of a group of intestinal diseases.

The white mice were inoculated with strains of the organisms that cause various intestinal diseases and so-called food poisonings. Those that recovered harbored the germs in their intestional tract and gall bladder, just as do human carriers. Guinea pigs and wild gray rats were also given the inoculations, but among their survivors no carriers were found. This does not mean that carriers may not exist among these rodents also, Dr. Branham pointed out, as the number of animals in the investigation was too small to give conclusive results.

Animal disease carriers may account for outbreaks in human beings which cannot otherwise be explained. Dr. Branham pointed out that food may become contaminated from infected rodents as easily as from infected humans.

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Influenza Decreases

Medicine

A very marked decrease in influenza is noted in the reports received by the U. S. Public Health Service for the week ending March 9. In 27 states and New York City there were only 1,600 cases as against over 7,000 for the same states the week before. This great decrease will probably bring the total for the entire country well below the figure for the corresponding week of 1928.

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