

Southwest a Laboratory

Anthropology

Indians of prehistoric America constitute rare material for the laboratories of science, Dr. A. V. Kidder said in a lecture at the Carnegie Institute of Washington.

Dr. Kidder, who directs the archaeological activities of the institution, spoke on the oldest known inhabitants of America and their importance to science. Two factors, he said, combine to create an unparalleled opportunity in the Southwest for study of the growth of early human culture. The first is the favorable climate of the Southwest, where shriveled mummy-like bodies of Indians who lived before the time of Christ have been preserved in the dry hot earth. These burials and possessions of the Indians found with them and in their shelters enable archaeologists to study the progress of their culture in the greatest detail, Dr. Kidder pointed out.

The other favoring factor is the scarcity of water in the Southwest, which caused the Indian groups to congregate where water supplies were good and to inhabit the same places, generation after generation. Thus the remains of their habitation have accumulated in the soil in successive layers and scientists can use principles of stratigraphy in determining the relative age and the order of development of various groups.

The remains thus preserved are tremendously worth study, he explained, because they reveal the course of progress when human beings succeeded in taming a wild grain to insure a cereal crop. The transitions of the nomadic and farming periods are lost in Egypt and Mesopotamia, Dr. Kidder stated. In the Southwest, where corn was the cereal crop, the earliest farmers, the Basket Makers, grew only a primitive variety. Later, the Cliff Dwellers and Pueblos grew a number of kinds, and improved the crop. The development of farming brought leisure to the people and made home life possible. Building arts could be experimented with, and community life with rites and rules became complex.

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Sleeping potions used to dull pain were well known to the ancient Greeks and to oriental physicians.

Mink is becoming so scarce that a fur corporation has worked out a process for turning Louisiana muskrat into synthetic mink.

American Receives Royal Society Medal

Chemistry—Physics

The Royal Society's highest honor in chemistry, the Davy medal, will be conferred upon Prof. G. N. Lewis of the University of California for his contributions to classical thermodynamics and the theory of chemical valence. Prof. Lewis is a pioneer in the study of atom structure and his researches have allowed chemists to know more precisely what happens when substances come together. The Davy medal was founded by the brother of the famous Sir Humphry Davy and is given annually for the most important discovery of chemistry in Europe, the United States or Canada.

Prof. Max Planck of the University of Berlin, famed as the originator of the quantum theory, has been awarded the Copley medal of the Royal Society for his contributions to theoretical physics.

Another German, Prof. Hans Geiger of Kiel University, whose atom counter is being used in laboratories all over the world, was given the Hughes medal by the Royal Society for the development of methods of counting alpha and beta particles.

The two Royal medals, which have

been awarded annually since their establishment by George IV, were awarded Prof. J. E. Littlewood of Cambridge, for his work on mathematical analysis, and Prof. Robert Muir, Glasgow immunologist, for his medical work.

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Insects as Fish Fodder

Ichthyology

The division of fish and game of the California Department of Natural Resources reports a novel method for securing natural food for baby trout, used by J. W. Ricker at the Cold Creek hatchery. An insect trap designed in the form of a funnel-shaped cloth sack, over which was suspended an electric light, was hung near the water and the light left burning the entire night. In this way, using a number of traps, several hundred pounds of insects were collected and fed to the young trout. Mr. Ricker said the captured insects provided splendid food but that this diet should be supplemented by other types of food, as the young trout did not do so well unless their diet was varied.

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