Czechoslovakian Prehistory

Archæology

Relics of men who inhabited Czechoslovakia between 3000 B. C. and 300 A. D. have been unearthed by a joint expedition from the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the Peabody Museum of Harvard.

In the course of less than a month's preliminary search, nineteen archaeological sites were uncovered, the director of the expedition, Vladimir J. Fewkes, reports.

His first official statement says: "Results obtained justify a belief that many of the most important problems relating to the antiquity of mankind may be more closely approached, and possibly solved, by extensive excavations in Czechoslovakia."

The preliminary expedition worked only in the province of Bohemia. Three of the sites containing traces of early inhabitants were dated as being of the Eneolithic, or Copper Age, to 2100 B. C. and 1800 B. C. a period just before their discovery of bronze. Three graves of these people were found, and also part of the settlement where the earth still holds quantities of their pottery, bone awls and chisels, stone knives, clay spindle whorls and loom weights used in making textiles.

"A huge house pit with two fireplaces and an unusual ashpit with stone slabs for heating and pebbles for cooking also were found," Mr. Fewkes states. "These latter discoveries are of an unusual character and it is believed that a careful analysis of them will add considerable to our knowledge of the Eneolithic Age."

Eight graves of the Bronze Age, encased in limestone slabs and containing highly contracted skeletons and bronze and pottery objects were among the expedition's discoveries. At these sites, too, were twenty-two urn burials containing cremated remains and accompanied by scores of pottery vessels and metal objects.

Remains of a settlement of the early Iron Age dating between 800 and 500 B. C. revealed several house pits and the impressions and decayed parts of some of the wooden posts that originally supported the house construction.

An urn burial from the Roman period, about the third century A. D., is pronounced representative of the true "Barbaric" or "Teutonic" culture.

The material found is to be divided between the two museums which conducted the expedition.

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Cactus Groves as Indian Orchards

Botany—Ethnology

The giant sahuaro cacti that stand like sentinels in the southern Arizona desert are fruit trees to the Papago Indians. Their red fruits, filled with sweet pulp, figure so largely on the red man's bill of fare that when the sahuaro and wheat harvests chance to be ripe at the same time he will divide his family into two groups so that he may still gather his share of the "figs from thistles."

In a report to the *Journal of Heredity,* Frank A. Thackery and A. R. Leding, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, tell of the high value set by the Papago on his cactus crop and of the methods he uses in gathering it.

Sahuaro fruits are the best sources of sugar known in the desert country, and the Indian has as much of a sweet tooth as his Caucasian brother. The Papago make use of the fruits mainly in the preparation of a syrup, which they keep in sealed clay jars until they are ready to use it. It will stay good for a year..

When the fruits show by their red color that they are ripe, a large part of the Papago community leave their villages and journey to their campsites in the midst of the sahuaro "forest." The women have charge of gathering the fruit and preparing the syrup. Gathering fuel and hauling water is the men's job, and since water often has to come from a distance of fifteen miles, the squaws are not necessarily getting the worst of the division of labor.

The women knock the ripe fruits off the tops of the giant cacti with long poles made of spliced cactus ribs and armed with a couple of hooks made of thorns. They pick them up off the ground, slit the skins with a swift slash of the thumbnail, and empty the pulp into a basket. It takes a good half-day's work to gather fourteen or fifteen quarts of this pulp.

Back in the camp, the pulp, with a little water added, is simmered over a fire in an earthen pot. The cooked juice is strained away from the pulp, and then boiled again until it is reduced to a syrup. This is poured into earthen jars and sealed shut.

Besides the syrup, the Indians sometimes prepare preserves of the sahuaro pulp. They also dry some of it without cooking, and eat this "as is" or moistened with water during the winter. The seeds left over from the syrup making are either ground into meal or kept for chicken feed.

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Deplores Forcing of Talentless

Psychology

A due regard for facts of heredity will release from the piano stool thousands of children who are now drudging away at forearm and finger movements without the slightest prospect of ever being able to convert their work into anything more than forearm and finger movements, declares Prof. Paul Popenoe, geneticist. At the same time, regard for the facts of heredity will discover plenty of undeveloped talent, from which may be made real musicians.

Tests of musical ability given to all children in many schools, have disclosed the fact that the untalented are now being given musical education in quite as large proportions as the talented, and it is evident that there is a great waste of energy, talent, and money, Prof. Popenoe states in the *Journal of Heredity.*

Much work remains to be done on the inheritance of musical and artistic capacity, he concludes. But various indications point to the fact that artistic talent is inborn, and in general it is inborn because it existed in the ancestry. In support of this argument, the geneticist marshals a parade of the child geniuses of the past who displayed precocious talent almost in babyhood. He also points to the scientific tests which probe an individual's traits that would be likely to aid or hinder success in the arts. Many of these traits depend on physiological conditions, inborn, perhaps inherited. Studies of families in which the artistic strain is evident bolster up the theory that talents are not distributed as freak gifts of nature but are rather the result of a talented ancestry.

Ability in the arts is not to be thought of as a phase of general superior intelligence, he states. The most promising pupils in an art class were found to be only mediocre in intelligence ratings.

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Hailstones three inches in diameter often fall during storms in India.