

voked into great waves or violent eddies it can tear apart or smash very stout structures. If the biggest big tree of California were rooted to the bottom off the California coast, it would not stay there through more than one or two winter storms. The first would strip it of every leaf, and the second or third would uproot it and dash its tough limbs to splinters on the rocks.

Good reason then for the humility of most water plants. They stay below the size that would enable the waves to tear them loose or rip them to pieces, and they keep their structure yielding, so that they go with the waves and currents, rather than stand stiffly against them, inviting destruction.

They are the meek. They have inherited the sea.

Science News Letter, September 23, 1933

GEOLOGY

Geologists Find Poetry in Rocks; Poets Write Geology

THERE ARE not only sermons in stones; there is poetry in them as well. So said Dr. R. S. Bassler, curator of geology at the U. S. National Museum, in an address given in Washington under the auspices of Science Service.

"Much of the poetry of nature which has endured has been written by students who have described their impressions with such care that they are scientifically correct, even though the underlying principles may not have been understood," said Dr. Bassler. "The geologist is seldom a poet and the poet rarely has an appreciation of geology, yet often they evidence a mutual understanding."

Poets who write about such subjects as the wind, the rain, and the dashing of waves against the shore, may not realize that they are really writing about geology, but they are. For the wind moves all the waters of the world, whether as vapor in the air that eventually falls as rain or snow, or as currents and waves in lakes and sea. And water, falling as rain, running as streams, freezing as ice, or dashing as waves, wears down even the "everlasting hills" and is the most potent of all the working tools of geological change.

Dr. Bassler's address was broadcast over the network of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Science News Letter, September 23, 1933

PSYCHOLOGY

"Kick" of Movie Love Scenes Measured in 16-Year-Olds

MEASURING the emotional flutterings of adolescents as they viewed a glamorous love scene in the movies was part of a program of scientific research reported by Dr. Christian A. Ruckmick of the State University of Iowa to the American Psychological Association at its Chicago meeting.

Scenes of romance and amorous approach produce a far greater effect on the emotions of young people aged about sixteen than on either younger children or those who have attained the age of twenty-two. Younger children, under twelve, received the greatest "kick" from scenes of excitement and personal danger, Dr. Ruckmick found. The emotional excitement was measured in all cases with a galvanograph.

Re-showing of the same films brought out the fact that the vicarious thrill of watching scenes of danger is not so lasting as that from watching an amorous embrace. Although the excitement resulting from the original showing of the hair-raising episode was the greater, repeated showings resulted in a rapid decline of the emotional effect. The young people could sit through six re-showings of the love scenes, however, without appreciable decline of response by the adolescents.

The same experiment, tried on persons suffering from mental diseases, showed that this technique might prove very useful to physicians in revealing past disturbing experiences in the mental lives of the patients.

Does Your Heart "Skip a Beat"?

If you were startled by hearing the sudden noise of a pistol shot, would your heart jump a beat or behave in other irregular fashion?

It might, it seems from research reported to the same meeting by Dr. Carney Landis, of the New York Psychiatric Institute. The popular idea that the heart is intimately connected with emotional experiences, especially of a surprise nature, receives support from Dr. Landis' experiments.

Psychologists have so far failed to confirm this idea because they did not observe carefully enough the timing of the startling experience with relation

to the period in the cycle of the heart's action, Dr. Landis said. At certain points in this cycle, the heart does not respond; at others, the paths are open and irregularity of action is produced.

Dr. Landis startled his subjects by sudden yells, by the raucous blast of an automobile horn, by the loud report of a pistol shot, by the setting off of a photo-flash lamp, and by tapping on the head with a blackboard eraser. The action of the heart was recorded in electrocardiograms.

Science News Letter, September 23, 1933

Sign in Picture Writing Of Mayas Deciphered

SUCCESS in identifying one of the long-sought signs of the Mayan picture writing is reported by J. Eric Thompson of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

This hieroglyph, which can now be recognized in the reading of old stone monuments in Mayan cities, is the sign for fifteen Tuns, or approximately 15 years. Since the Mayas counted "by twenties," the numbers five, ten, fifteen, and twenty, were important and much used in their calculations.

"Glyphs representing five, ten, and twenty Tuns respectively have been identified but the glyph for fifteen Tuns, the remaining division in the vigesimal system, has heretofore eluded identification," said Mr. Thompson.

"The task of translating Maya inscriptions is extremely difficult, the greater part of the glyphs not yet having yielded their meanings. Indeed, in the past twenty years the number of glyphs translated could be counted on both hands."

The sign for fifteen Tuns, or years, devised by the Mayan Indians is not very different from the sign for twenty years. It is an oval decorated block standing on a pedestal.

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Buying a winter coat on a warm day now becomes a pleasure in one store that maintains cold weather temperature in a room where coats are tried on.