New Ape Fossil

A new fossil species of ape, quite unlike any now in existence, has been turned up out of the marly soil of southern France, at Sénèze, in the department of Haut-Loire. The animal is represented by a skull in fairly good condition, with the lower jawbone and almost all of the teeth still intact.

Prof. Charles Depéret of the University of Lyons, who has made a study of the skull, states that the animal was an old female. This is evidenced by the relatively small size of the eyeteeth, which are large in males, and by the worn condition of all the teeth, especially the molars.

The ape must have been a rather large animal, for the skull has a length of seven and a quarter inches over all, and the width over the cheek arches, one of which is now broken, was about four and one-half inches. The greatest height from the eyebrow ridge to the corner of the lower jaw, is five inches.

The skull is remarkable for the great protrusion of the face, which almost parallels that of the modern baboons. Prof. Depéret does not contend that the creature was an ancestor of the baboons, but cites the development of face and jaw as a case of "convergent evolution." In other respects the skull offers some suggestions of the snouted monkeys of Asia.

Prof. Depéret has named the new species *Dolichopithecus arvernensis.*

Paleontology
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

New Comet Departing

Peltier's comet, first located on Thursday, February 20, by L. C. Peltier, an amateur astronomer of Delphos, Ohio, is now departing from the neighborhood of the earth. It was already leaving when the discovery was made, E. C. Bower and F. L. Whipple, of the Students' Observatory of the University of California, have calculated. This announcement was made to Science Service by Dr. A. O. Leuschner, director of the observatory.

The calculations show that the comet approached nearest the sun on January 15, and was then about ten per cent. farther from that body than the earth. On February 15 it was the closest to the earth, only 20 million miles distant. Though nobody saw it, it was then about the tenth magnitude, visible in a moderate sized telescope. It was the eleventh magnitude when discovered, and will have decreased to below the thirteenth magnitude by March 9, so that it can only be seen with the largest instruments.

This is Mr. Peltier's second cometary discovery. In November, 1925, he discovered a previously unknown comet, but had to share the honor with a Polish astronomer named Wilk, who found it independently. Thus it was named the Peltier-Wilk comet. The new comet has been observed by Schwassmann and Wachmann, two astronomers at the University of Berlin and if it should prove that they made their observations before hearing of Mr. Peltier's discovery, their names will also be attached to the comet.

Astronomy
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

Warns of Icy Wings

Ice on airplane wings, the cause of many accidents in the past, may lose much of its terror with the aid of a new warning device developed at the United States Bureau of Standards. It does not prevent the formation of ice, but gives the pilot warning, by the shining of a red light on his instrument board, when conditions are such that ice is likely to form. Then he can take proper precautions, either landing, or going into a warmer layer of air.

Experiments have shown that ice forms at temperatures between 26 and 32 degrees Fahrenheit, when the airplane is flying in air that is saturated with water vapor. The instrument consists of a temperature-actuated switch, operating on a battery of pocket flashlight cells. When the dangerous temperatures are reached, the red light flashes. If it is cold and dry, the pilot can either ignore its warning, or switch it off, for then there is no danger, even at the low temperatures.

Aviation
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

Scientists on Radio

Radio listeners throughout the country will be able to hear prominent scientists give popular descriptions of their work when a new series of radio talks arranged by Science Service begins over the Columbia Broadcasting System. The first talk will be given on Friday, March 28, from 3:45 to 4:00 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, by Dr. Warren S. Thompson, director of the Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems, located at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Dr. Thompson has devoted many years to a study of population, and will speak on the subject "Our Future Population," particularly appropriate in this year of the census.

Other speakers, who will be heard on succeeding Friday afternoons include Dr. Paul R. Heyl, physicist at the Bureau of Standards, who will tell how he weighed the earth; Dr. C. G. Abbot, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and leading authority on the sun, who will tell about "The Sun and Ourselves"; Dr. J. McKeen Cattell, eminent psychologist, speaking on the uses of his science; Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, Harvard University geologist, who will discuss the latest knowledge of the interior of the earth; and Commander N. H. Heck, of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, whose interesting subject will be "Earthquakes in the United States." All of the talks will be popular in style, so as to be of interest to a listener with no previous knowledge of the subject.

In presenting these talks over the Columbia Broadcasting System, Science Service is continuing work that it began in 1924. At that time, cooperating with the National Research Council, it aided in the first regular series of scientific radio talks ever presented. Also, at annual meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, it has cooperated with that body in presenting talks by distinguished scientists in attendance. The new series will be the first regular series of scientific radio talks to go out over a nationwide network.

General Science
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

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Huge Telescope—Amateur

The world's largest telescope, made up of a battery of smaller telescopes, is under construction in Berkeley, Calif., at the home of Dr. C. W. Woodworth, University of California professor, who hopes to have it completed and in operation within a few months.

The big instrument, which will concentrate the power of 400 small telescopes, will have a reflecting surface nearly twice as large as the Mount Wilson reflector, the largest now known. The 200-inch telescope, now under construction for the California Institute of Technology, will have a reflecting surface more than twice its area, however.

Four hundred small mirrors, none larger than 15 square inches, will make

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up the 100 square feet of reflecting surface of the telescope. The "eyepiece" of the instrument will be located on top of a garage, 40 feet high.

Dr. Woodworth's plan of concentrating the power of a large number of easily constructed small telescopes into one big instrument has never been tried on such a large scale and, if satisfactory, will permit much more economical construction of astronomical telescopes, it is said. The difficulty is to get all the mirrors to bring their images to a focus at precisely the same place. Otherwise clear view cannot be obtained.

Dr. Woodworth, who has been working on the telescope for the past three years, is doing all the work on his project, even to the grinding and silvering of the mirror units.

Astronomy
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

Sunned Yeast

Yeast that has had its chance to absorb the ultra-violet rays of sunlight has proved effective in keeping young chicks free from the disabling and often fatal disease of leg weakness, in experiments performed at the University of Wisconsin by Dr. Harry Steenbock, Dr. J. G. Halpin and Dr. G. E. Holmes. This disease, which is really a form of rickets, has been combated in the past by giving the chicks doses of codliver oil, but it is pointed out that irradiated yeast is cheaper, easier to mix with the ration, and less likely to leave undesirable flavors in the flesh of the young fowls.

Medicine—Animal Husbandry
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

Woman "Robinson Crusoe"

The story of a woman "Robinson Crusoe" who lived alone on an island for twenty long years is told by Dr. Roy L. Moodie, who has been delving into the records of old native life in the region of Santa Monica, Calif., in his study of prehistoric diseases in America.

The feminine Crusoe had been a member of a small group of Indians which lived on San Nicolas Island, off the California coast, about a hundred years ago. The Spanish fathers persuaded the group to leave their lonely island and find better protection at the Santa Barbara Mission. But this woman refused to come. All alone she demonstrated her self sufficiency in the world by making her home of whale ribs and brush, and by living off the abundant fish, abalones, birds, seals, and some plant products. She made her clothing of bird skins. When at last she was brought to the Mission she died within six weeks.

The island possesses many relics of aboriginal life, but none so romantic as the record of the Lost Woman, Dr. Moodie said.

Ethnology
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

Lack of Lenses

Difficulty in getting the right kind of glass for lenses is holding up the introduction of home television sets in England, a recent issue of *The Engineer,* a leading British technical publication, reports. It is expected that the sets will be available shortly. Each will contain a six inch and a four inch lens.

Television
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

Mystery River

In the hope of discovering the unknown, unmapped source of the Orinoco River, Dr. and Mrs. Herbert S. Dickey will set out next month on an expedition, under the auspices of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

No less than five previous expeditions have attempted to reach the source of this South American river of mystery, including one expedition by Dr. Dickey himself in 1928. Serious damage to his outboard motor boat forced him to retrace his way along the river without attaining his goal.

The source of the river is sought by Dr. Dickey not only as a missing link in geographical data, but also because he is eager to study the tribes of the region, present or ancient. There is a possibility that the people of the Orinoco source formed part of the old trail of migrants from the Amazon to the Orinoco, he explained. Explorers from the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania once found pottery on islands of the Amazon which was similar to pottery of the Orinoco.

Besides Dr. and Mrs. Dickey, both seasoned and enthusiastic explorers, the party will include Major De Forest Norton, formerly of the U. S. Army, a photographer and a wireless operator. The expedition plans to be off about March twentieth, and will devote six months to the quest.

Geography
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930

Cancer Experiments

Although Dr. Walter B. Coffey and Dr. John B. Humber of San Francisco have been asked by the Senate Commerce Committee to come to Washington to explain their experimental work with a new cancer treatment, no definite date has been set for their appearance.

Their attendance in Washington has been requested by Senator Hiram W. Johnson, chairman of the committee, and Senator William J. Harris, who is chairman of the sub-committee which was formed last spring to investigate the possibilities and practicabilities of federal government aid in the matter of learning more about cancer and working out a cure through years of research work.

Dr. Francis Carter Wood of Columbia University Institute of Cancer Research, Dr. James Ewing of the Cornell University Medical School, Dr. H. Gideon Wells of the University of Chicago, and Dr. W. H. Howell, director of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, are some of the men prominent in cancer research who were heard by the committee last summer. These men told the committee how they thought the federal government could help to forward the cause of cancer investigation.

Drs. Coffey and Humber have recently announced successful results in the treatment of a few cases of cancer with an extract from the cortex of the adrenal gland of sheep. However, they stated in their report that the work was in the experimental stage. This fact was also emphasized in the editorial comment of the Journal of the American Medical Association, which warned that the method is far from being in the nature of a specific method of treating cancer leading to cure or alleviation. In spite of this, hundreds of sufferers from cancer are reported to have besieged the laboratory of Drs. Coffey and Humber in the hope of receiving the treatment.

Dr. Boris Sokoloff, who is now working in the laboratory of Dr. Leo Loeb, of the Washington Medical School at St. Louis, reported on a similar line of investigation at the International Physiological Congress at Boston last fall. Dr. Sokoloff told of the destructive effect on cancer of an extract of the adrenal cortex mixed with an iron salt and pyrrol blue. This work is also still in the experimental stage.

Medicine
Science News-Letter, March 8, 1930