BOTANY

NATURE RAMBLINGS
by Frank Thone

Corn Farmers 1,000 Years Ago

THE CORN we now grow is not essentially different from the corn grown by the Indians a thousand years ago.

The age of the highest development of the Pueblos in the Southwest has been determined at about 1000 A. D. This great Indian civilization knew corn—was, in fact, founded on corn. Corn was the principal crop these ancient aborigines grew on their irrigated farms on the canyon bottoms; it was their main dependence for food and the central fact around which their elaborate religious ceremonials revolved. To the Pueblos, corn was life.

For this reason, their dead were often buried with ears of corn in their hands. In the dry, hot earth of the caves, their bodies dried into mummies, with garments, weapons and all other funeral gifts intact. So it happens that scientists have recovered many ears of the corn they grew, and we know their varieties as accurately as we know the kinds of corn grown in our own township last summer.

This corn is not different in any essential from the corn grown in Iowa and Texas and Georgia now. The ears are shorter, to be sure, and have fewer rows of grains to the cob, but they are corn ears unmistakably. They are different from modern ears of corn as the Indians who raised them are different from modern men; but there is no more chance of mistaking them for another kind of grain than there is of mistaking a man for a monkey.

These thousand-year-old Pueblos had several varieties of corn, just as their descendants have today. And like the modern Pueblos, they seem to have attached much importance to the color of the grain, for there are red and blue cobs as well as yellow. The corn grown by the present Pueblos is bigger, and on longer cobs, and white has been added to the grain colors. But it is very evidently the offspring of the grain of their ancestors.

Many centuries earlier than the "golden age" of the Pueblo culture their predecessors, the Basket-Makers, also raised corn. It was not greatly different from the corn of the Pueblos—differs less than the Pueblo corn does from modern types.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Lloyd's Lady Becomes Oldest True Human

THE ANCIENT lady of Lloyd's, the skull previously famed as the oldest Londoner, has become the oldest known true human being of the species *Homo sapiens.*

She was so pronounced by Prof. G. Elliot Smith, British anthropologist, to the Congress of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences. Prof. Smith finds the Lloyd's skull discovered in 1925 is modern in type but probably contemporary with early Mousterian times and therefore by many thousands of years the oldest known *Homo sapiens.*

The skull when first found was assigned to the late Stone Age or upper palaeolithic period, and Prof. Smith's new pronouncement probably more than doubles its previously accepted age of about twenty thousand years.

Homo sapiens is the species to which the existing races of men belong. The Neanderthal race is widely found and known from skeletons that have been excavated in Europe. These ancient men lived in Mousterian times, contemporaneously with the race of true men represented by the Lloyd's skull. But the Neanderthalers are considered to be another species of *Homo* and not the direct ancestors of living men. The Neanderthal race died out in prehistoric times.

The Lloyd's skull interests scientists because it seems to push back the lineage of present races much farther than hitherto credited.

The oldest Londoner, in the opinion of Prof. Smith, was a left-handed lady, who lived to 45 or 50 years of age. Her broken skull was unearthed in 1925 from deep excavations for an office building for Lloyd's, the famous insurance firm.

The remains of prehistoric animals had already been found in the City (financial district) of London near where the skull was found. Both above and below the level at which the skull was found bones of the mammoth have been discovered and, at a greater depth, the complete skeleton of a woolly rhinoceros. The deposits in which the present discovery was made belong to the pleistocene gravels of the Thames bed.

The skull was completely fossilized, and the state of the edge of the fractured bone, which was also completely fossilized at its fractured parts, showed that it had been broken in ancient times, at the time or possibly before it was deposited in the beds. There can be little doubt that it was carried to the spot, like the other animal bones, by floods coming down from higher up the river.

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BOTANY

Fungus-Killing Fungus Found in Louisiana

USUALLY, fungi mean to farmers nothing but foes. But a fungus has been found in Louisiana soil that appears to be a friend to the sugar planter, for it poisons another fungus, the *Pithium* species that attacks the roots of cane.

The discovery was made by E. C. Tims of the University of Louisiana. Laboratory tests indicate that the fungus-killing fungus does not act merely by robbing the parasite of its nourishment, but that it apparently produces something that is an active poison to it.

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