

ARCHAEOLOGY

King Mycerinus, Like Humpty, Was Hard to Put Together

KIND-HEARTED Pharaoh Mycerinus, credited with inventing the dole system 5,000 years ago for Egypt, left a hard enough task to museum workers in Boston, Mass.—putting his statue together again.

Restoring a fine alabaster portrait of the famous monarch has at last been achieved satisfactorily, reports the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, (*Bulletin*, April) which has been perplexed by the pieces for 25 years. While France debated whether to restore arms to the Venus of Milo, Boston wondered what to do with Mycerinus, who is in a far more incomplete state.

Scattered fragments of the statue were among the important finds made by Prof. George Reisner, director of the Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition to Egypt in 1907. Exploring the funerary temple of Mycerinus, near his pyramid at Giza, the expedition found evidences of rough usage of the place by robbers long ago. Knees of the King's great alabaster statue lay in a temple corridor. Fragments of torso and shoulder were down a hole in a storeroom. A plunderer's trench yielded the King's head in alabaster and more body pieces.

For several years, the expedition clung to hope of finding further portions of the great statue. When no more appeared, the Museum displayed the lower part of the King's statue, showing his hands resting on his knees. On a shelf above, Mycerinus' head looked out on visitors, calmly and regally ignoring the gap where his torso should have been.

The Great Pyramid of Egypt was built

in 20 years, but putting a shattered Pharaoh of the Pyramid Age together again may take longer, the Mycerinus statue demonstrates.

The alabaster Pharaoh has gone through no less than four experimental stages, while curators worried. Those in charge were extremely reluctant to venture filling in missing parts of the statue. It was hardly the scholarly thing to do, they feared. On the other hand, visitors were distracted and certainly received a false impression from seeing Pharaoh Mycerinus with his head on a tray and his broad shoulders totally missing.

The Museum tried modeling a plain and inconspicuous body form in cement merely as a physical support for the one broad shoulder and mighty chest of the Pharaoh and to join head and hips together. Then they ventured to model a more realistic plaster body in the style of the ancient sculptor of the work.

Now, lappets of the wig and outline of belt have been boldly added, and the missing arms and feet have been supplied, according to models of the same period. With this solution, the Museum curators really believe that they have got the Pharaoh of the Third Pyramid off their shoulders at last. They have preserved scholarly carefulness by painting the restored parts buff and even outlining them with a fine white line. The public can see the Pharaoh in all his complete powerful majesty.

Mycerinus owes his fame as the kind-hearted Pharaoh of the Pyramid Age to stories told by historian Herodotus in the fifth century B. C. If Herodotus was cor-

rectly informed on his ancient history, Mycerinus invented the dole system of helping those who were hard pressed. The dole money he took out of the royal treasury.

His father, Cheops, on the other hand, had used unemployment relief work, putting laborers in large shifts at work on his Great Pyramid at times when the Nile flooded the land, and agricultural work had to be suspended.

Science News Letter, May 11, 1935

A machine has been devised to peel potatoes by scuffing off their skins.



ASSEMBLING THE KING

The view above shows the site where the head was found. Below, the head rests proudly on a shelf above his knees, calmly ignoring the gap where his torso should have been. The final step in the assembly of his parts is shown on the facing page.

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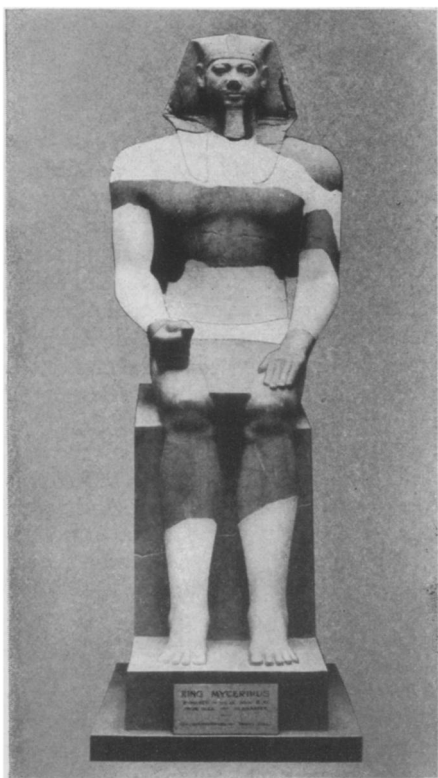
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PUT TOGETHER AGAIN

MEDICINE

Early Treatment Would Eradicate Bright's Disease

BRIGHT'S disease, third leading cause of death today, can be completely eradicated if it is treated in its early acute stages, before it becomes chronic, Dr. Francis D. Murphy of Milwaukee, told the American College of Physicians meeting, basing his opinion on a ten-year study of 136 cases.

Bright's disease, or nephritis, as physicians term it, has become a serious problem because colds and sore throats are not usually considered a factor in causing it. Too often the disease, following such infection of nose and throat passes unnoticed until considerable damage has been done to the kidneys.

"When nephritis becomes chronic, there is little that can be done to forestall the downward trend of the disease," Dr. Murphy said.

Therefore he urged physicians to look for the disease in its early stages when treatment will be successful in curing it. Bright's disease causes more deaths than any other maladies except heart disease and cancer. Its high death-rate can be reduced only by attacking it in its early, acute stages, Dr. Murphy declared.

Science News Letter, May 11, 1935

PHYSIOLOGY

Two Hormones, Twins of Those Known, Found in Pituitary

TWO NEW hormones from the pituitary gland, each a twin to already known pituitary hormones, were reported by Dr. Leo Loeb, of Washington University, St. Louis, in an address to the American College of Physicians following his presentation with the John Phillips Memorial Medal of the College.

The new pituitary hormones act on thyroid and female sex glands, respectively. Scientists had previously recognized a species difference in the extracts from the pituitary that influence thyroid and sex glands. An extract from the pituitary gland of a cow has a stimulating effect on the cow's sex glands but just the opposite effect on the guinea pig's glands, for example.

Investigations conducted by Dr. Loeb during the past two months and reported in Philadelphia for the first time show that this different effect is due to the production by the pituitary of two different hormones with antagonistic effects on female sex glands. In the pituitary glands of cattle, the ovary-stimulating hormone predominates while in pituitary glands of other species of animals the antagonistic hormone predominates.

The presence of these two hormones, where only one was formerly thought to exist, may have a relation to the anti-hormone effect discovered by Dr. J. B. Collip and associates of McGill University, Dr. Loeb said. Dr. Collip and associates have found substances called anti-hormones in the blood of men and other animals that check the effect of the pituitary hormones.

Dr. Loeb's other recent discovery of two thyroid-stimulating hormones from

the pituitary may throw further light on the cause of Graves' disease or exophthalmic goiter, the disease characterized by pop-eyes, rapid pulse and other disturbances. Dr. Loeb and other scientists have been able to produce all the Graves' disease symptoms in healthy animals by giving them doses of thyroid-stimulating pituitary hormone, which suggests that disorder of the pituitary may be a cause of this kind of goiter. Dr. Loeb is now studying the pituitary glands of persons who died of Graves' disease. He hopes to find which of the two thyroid-stimulating pituitary hormones predominate in these glands, and thus may be responsible for the development of Graves' disease.

Science News Letter, May 11, 1935

A person who eats an egg a day probably gets enough Vitamin D for his needs, even if he gets none in other foods, says a Government vitamin authority.

"Fascinating"

RESEARCH

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