

"Erosion control is more than a charitable impulse, a vote-getting device, or a euphemism for a dole. It is a conscious, intelligent effort to repair, as rapidly as possible, what has been damaged by road cutting, by down-hill instead of horizontal plowing, by the destruction of the forest cover by fumes, and by other interferences with the established pattern of Nature. It checks the run-off after rain and melting snow; it prevents the scouring and scoring of hillsides; it reduces the risk of freshets; it lightens the load of silt carried by the streams.

"It is one of the finest examples of man's undoing by cooperation the harm which he has done individually in unintelligent self-interest. It is a partial fulfillment of the promise which the biologist sees of increased comfort, improved health, and greater happiness for all in such study and understanding as will lead man to be a harmonious and not a rebellious part of the Mosaic of Nature."

Dr. Peirce's address was put on the air over the network of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Science News Letter, July 13, 1935

ARCHAEOLOGY

One Door or Three, Never Two, Believed Mayan Rule

A PUBLIC building may have one door or three, but never two.

Archaeologists who recently counted doors in ruined cities in tropical America have wondered whether this could actually have been a strange building rule of Mayan architects, centuries ago. Now, through important new discoveries at ruins of Yaxchilan, famous Mayan city, the belief is confirmed.

Reporting the discoveries to the University Museum, Philadelphia, Linton Satterthwaite, Jr., leader of an expedition to the Mexican-Guatemalan border country, states that Yaxchilan had previously seemed to contradict the theory of uneven numbers of doors. Several partially cleared buildings had revealed only two doorways.

At the suggestion of Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, who recently advanced the theory of the uneven doors, Mr. Satterthwaite directed further clearing of the Yaxchilan buildings, and in each instance found a third doorway.

"The great importance of these doorways," Mr. Satterthwaite stated, "lies in their sculptured and inscribed lintels, which bear on their surface bas-reliefs similar in subject and technique to the enormous monolithic stelae familiar in Mayan art, but far superior to the latter because of the delicacy of workmanship required for their small size.

"Of the inscriptions, only numbers and dates in the Mayan calendar can be deciphered with certainty but where these are present they almost invariably yield the exact date of the bas-relief and therefore presumably of the building as well. It is possible, therefore, to place

all such dated examples in strict chronological sequence, to a degree possible in the study of no other ancient art.

"In addition to the lintels we also found and photographed a hitherto unnoticed altar lying overthrown in the jungle growth, as well as a large new fragment to add to a previously known stela.

"Among these discoveries are two sculptures which will take their place among the outstanding specimens of Mayan art so that in addition to their importance as historical documents they are of major interest for their artistic achievement and for the religious scenes they bear."

Science News Letter, July 13, 1935

MUSEUM SCIENCE

Urges Medical Ethics For Restorers of Paintings

BEAUTY doctors of the art world who perform dangerous operations on important and famous paintings, to prolong their life and restore their loveliness, may yet be required to obtain a license, just as a surgeon is required to do.

Comparing the "health" of a Titian painting to the health of a human being, E. W. Forbes, director of the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass., speaking in Washington, stressed the need of adopting high standards for art restorers, patterned after medical ethics and professional requirements. Mr. Forbes addressed the American Association of Museums.

Art restorers, who treat such ailments of paintings as cracked paint, dirt, dis-

colored varnish, and over-painting, have long inclined to the practice of cherishing their personal trade secrets and discoveries. This should be abandoned, Mr. Forbes urged.

"It is as unethical for a restorer to retain for his own private use any wonderful discovery which he makes," declared Mr. Forbes, "as it would be for a doctor to conceal from the world some great discovery which he might make to enable him to cure, let us say, cancer or tuberculosis."

Art restorers are now offered a way of handling this matter of sharing their discoveries. Mr. Forbes stated that a journal, similar to the journals of medical science, has been provided in which art restorers can publish their researches.

He expressed the hope that, with all serious students in the field combining forces, in ten years or more "we shall have a group of competent restorers who know more than any restorer does know now, or ever has known."

Licensing art restorers, as doctors of medicine are now required to be licensed, is foreseen by Mr. Forbes, who predicted a time when a commission of competent people may be named to judge which art restorers should be licensed to perform dangerous operations on great pictures.

Science News Letter, July 13, 1935

HOME ECONOMICS

Find Way to Feed "Cattle Food" to Humans

A WAY to feed grain sorghum to humans, and make them like it, has been devised by dietitians.

How ordinary recipes may be altered to use these "cattle feed" grains in biscuit, muffins and steamed breads has been reported to the American Home Economics Association.

The experiments, by Emma L. Bond and Helen B. Burton of the University of Oklahoma, are expected to be useful in sections of the country where grain sorghums are produced. Persons who cannot eat wheat because of sensitiveness to that form of protein may also find sorghum bread useful, the experimenters suggested. The grains used in the experiments were dwarf yellow milo and black hull kafir corn.

Science News Letter, July 13, 1935

In his studies of ability of adults to learn, Prof. E. L. Thorndike finds that "a man at 65 may expect to learn at least half as much per hour as he could at 25 and more than he could at the ages of eight to ten years."