



Impatient Awakenings

WE LEARNED to sing, in nursery and kindergarten days, of the sun and warm spring winds shaking sleepy-headed violets and buttercups out of their beds, as if they were reluctant to be awakened after their long nap. But this certainly is not true of all plants. Many of them are most impatient about staying abed a day longer than they must; they will even come out indiscreetly early and get their noses nipped by quite legitimate and timely freezes.

We have been treated to exactly such a spectacle during the past few weeks. All through the East and Southeast, there has been most untimely warmth for the season. Forsythias, honeysuckles, and any number of other kinds of ornamental shrubs have been popping their buds open, only to be chilled by sudden puffs of freezing air from the far reaches of Alaska and northwestern Canada. More serious, because people's livings are involved, has been the premature flowering of fruit trees in Georgia and other states in the Deep South. Some orchardists even resorted to the desperate expedient of burying cakes of ice among the roots of their trees, hoping to chill them into decent dormancy by that means.

But there are plenty of plants that regularly open their flowers before it can fairly be called spring. Skunk cabbage, pussy willows, soft maples, alders are among the hardy folk of the woods that scatter their pollen to the four winds while said winds are still too chilly for the more delicate, if showier, spring flowers that wait kindlier airs—and the insects that must minister to their seed-making processes. Witch hazel also is a late-winter bloomer—

but this queer shrub blossoms only in the winter, when it comes to that; its stringy yellow flowers can be found until the ground freezes hard in December, and again just as soon as late January thaws give shadow of leave for blossoming.

All these pre-spring flowers, as well as practically all of the flowers that blossom before the middle of May, are perennials, using up sugar or starch stored in woody stem or underground fleshy rootstock or bulb to meet the imperious demands for material and energy imposed by the rapidly developing flower structures.

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METEOROLOGY

Flood Rains Broke Records During Month of January

WITH the flood situation now out of its first emergency phase, the U.S. Weather Bureau has taken time to size up and summarize the rains that brought the great rivers out of their banks. During January, the meteorologists state, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana had three times the normal rainfall for that month. It was the heaviest January precipitation on record for these states.

Total rainfall for the month averaged 15.37 inches in Kentucky, 14.67 inches in Tennessee, 9.82 inches in Indiana, and 9.36 inches in Ohio. The enormous amount of water represented by these excessive rains is indicated by the fact that for Kentucky alone the total was nearly 45 billion tons.

Several states on the borders of the flood region, and even outside it, also took a heavy soaking. New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Kansas all broke their respective January precipitation records.

At the same time, however, rain- and snowfall shortage continues to be reported from parts of the West. From the Rocky Mountains westward, including Montana, all states are short of the normal for the season. The Washington average was only slightly more than half the January normal.

The Southeast continues to suffer anxiety over unseasonable warmth. Vegetation over a large area continues to be dangerously advanced, fruit trees are in full bloom, and in southern Georgia pear trees have actually set fruit. A sudden cold storm from the northwest could be ruinous.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

New Type Stone Age Skull Found in Southern Germany

A SKULL of an entirely new type of ancient human being, older than Neandertal man, resembling him in some respects yet more "modern" in others, has been discovered in a gravel pit at Steinheim, near Stuttgart, Germany. It has been subjected to critical scientific examination by Dr. Fritz Berckhemer of the Württemberg Museum of Natural History.

The skull was very little broken, and lacks only the lower jaw and a few fragments of the facial bones. It resembles the Neandertal type especially in the characteristic pronounced eyebrow ridges, the wide nasal opening, the massive upper jaw, and the rather low cranial arch. It is markedly different in being shorter, relatively wider, and much more rounded off at the back, and in having considerably less back-slope to face and forehead. In these respects it is more like modern man, *Homo sapiens*.

The antiquity of the Steinheim skull is unquestionable. In the gravel pit with it, and extending up to a level about four feet above the location of the skull itself, were bones, teeth, and tusks of an ancient species of elephant, that disappeared from Europe before the end of the pleistocene Ice Age. From geological evidence available, Dr. Berckhemer has concluded that the new skull is two or three hundred thousand years younger than the famous Heidelberg jaw, but somewhat older than typical Neandertal man. He does not regard Steinheimer man as directly ancestral to Neandertal man, but thinks that the resemblances between them can be explained better by regarding them both as descendants from a still unknown common ancestral stock.

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