

happened in the Middle Ages, so the evidence mainly suggests.

Archaeologists are now puzzled to know what these early Africans were like. Skulls they have seen are not true Negro type. They may represent a mixture, even including distant foreigners.

BOTANY

Seeds Sleep 60 Years, Sprout When Houses Fall

SNOW-WHITE'S long slumber, before the Prince kissed her awake, is made to seem a brief cat-nap by comparison with the record of tobacco seeds accidentally hidden under houses in Costa Rica. These tiny seeds have remained dormant as long as the houses stood—sixty years or more—and are aroused to germination and growth when the houses are knocked down by an earthquake or demolished by their owners.

The tale of the sleeping seeds was told by W. A. Archer, botanist for the U. S. Department of Agriculture, who has just returned after four years as a plant explorer in Latin America. Mr. Archer's special objective was to find new varieties of tobacco, but he has also brought back seeds of many other kinds of plants.

A couple of generations ago, he stated, a good deal of tobacco used to be raised in Costa Rica. In recent years the crop has been given up. But in the earth under the basementless houses are large numbers of tobacco seeds, and when a house is destroyed, rain and sun have a chance to make them grow. By collecting seed from these volunteer tobacco crops amid house ruins, Mr. Archer was able to save for experimental and breeding purposes a number of tobacco varieties long since out of cultivation.

Another find of possible importance

Urging extended digging to north and south of Mapungubwe, Prof. Fouche declares that deeper knowledge of native failures and achievements in Africa's past may aid Britain in improving its relations with native subjects.

Science News Letter, March 12, 1938

food, and that you can't trust the drinking water—and even less the native alcoholic beverages. However, he added philosophically, you can always eat bananas. They may become monotonous, but at least they're dependable.

Perils of snakes he shrugged off. In the whole four years, he declared, he saw exactly three wild snakes. The real danger in the American tropics comes from insects that carry a variety of most ungodly diseases.

Science News Letter, March 12, 1938

London is seeking to lessen its famous fogs by a campaign against smoke.

● RADIO

March 17, 4:00 p. m., E.S.T.

ROOTS WITHOUT PLANTS—Dr. Philip R. White of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.

March 24, 4:15 p. m., E.S.T.

EVOLUTION TO ORDER—Dr. Albert Blakeslee of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

In the Science Service series of radio discussions led by Watson Davis, Director, over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

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