

ration is controversial, and has many vandal acts to its discredit.

"Until quite recently," he says, "the pictures in big country houses were periodically handed over to the house carpenter to brighten up as best he could."

The carpenter usually added a harmless coat of varnish, or a shiny coat of oil, which turned the painting black later. Or, given time and reserve energy, he would scrub at dirt and thick varnish with disastrous results. Professional restorers followed much the same tactics.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, it seems, the public admired dark brown pictures, by the confused reasoning that good paintings were often dark and therefore dark paintings were good. This thought enabled restorers to cover many a disaster by a coat of what Sir Kenneth derisively calls brown sauce.

Then, taste swung to light pink pictures, and one dealer kept a restorer busy giving ladies rosebud mouths. That fad, too, is over.

Now, with X-rays and infra-red rays, restoring is more enlightened work, literally. With these scientific aids, there is less excuse for false experiments. And a gallery director can more confidently decide what Sir Kenneth considers the big question: "Will the picture look more beautiful restored or unrestored?"

Science News Letter, August 20, 1938

ECOLOGY

Rays Influence Antlers, Austrian Studies Show

ULTRAVIOLET rays, known to have great influence in bone formation, appear to be as influential in the growth of deer's antlers, from the researches of Prof. N. Schuhmacher of the University of Innsbruck. Prof. Schuhmacher found that the antler growth of deer in the Austrian Alps was greatest in years showing the largest number of sunny days and average temperatures above normal.

Science News Letter, August 20, 1938

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Cities' Health Honor Roll Shows Low Diphtheria Rates

TWENTY cities are cited for praise by the American Medical Association in its annual survey of deaths from diphtheria.

These twenty had not a single death from diphtheria during 1937. Nine of them had no fatalities from this disease in the last two years. Ten of them have had neither diphtheria nor typhoid deaths.

Against the praiseworthy twenty are set nine cities with a record much less proud. These are cities in which diphtheria's toll has been heaviest.

The honor roll cities for 1937, as listed by the American Medical Association, are:

Bridgeport, Conn.; Cambridge, Mass.; Des Moines, Iowa; Duluth, Minn.; Elizabeth, N. J.; Erie, Pa.; Hartford, Conn.; Long Beach, Calif.; Lowell, Mass.; Lynn, Mass.; Omaha, Neb.; Reading, Pa.; Rochester, N. Y.; Somerville, Mass.; Spokane, Wash.; Springfield, Mass.; Trenton, N. J.; Utica, N. Y.; Wichita, Kan.; Worcester, Mass.

Of these, Bridgeport, Duluth, Long Beach, Lynn, Reading, Rochester, Somerville, Spokane, Utica and Wichita had no deaths from typhoid fever during the same period.

Utica has had no deaths from diphtheria in four years. Erie and Rochester have had none in three years.

At the unenviable end of the rating scale come the nine cities with the highest diphtheria death rate for 1937. These are:

Atlanta, Ga.; Birmingham, Ala.; Dal-

las, Tex.; Fall River, Mass.; Fort Worth, Tex.; Waterbury, Conn.; Evansville, Ind.; Knoxville, Tenn.; El Paso, Tex.

The A.M.A. has made fifteen annual reports of diphtheria mortality in the large cities of the United States. Since 1923, the first year, there has been a drop in the death rate of 13.13 per hundred thousand.

"It is evident that the various elements of the diphtheria prevention program have been extraordinarily effective," the Journal states editorially.

Science News Letter, August 20, 1938

PHYSICS

Northern Lights Not Noisy, Veteran Physicist Declares

NORTHERN Lights do not cause the rustling or swishing sounds frequently attributed to them, declares Dr. A. S. Eve, professor emeritus of McGill University and now resident in London, in a new publication of the Smithsonian Institution. It is physically impossible for them to make sound, he explains, because the 60-mile-high atmosphere where they surge and flare is so rare as to be a fairly high vacuum, and sounds can not exist or travel in a vacuum.

The noises heard and reported by many aurora observers, Dr. Eve suggests, are more probably due to electrical disturbances such as brush discharges occurring on the earth's surface near the observers, who fail to notice them because the Northern Lights are absorbing all their attention.

Science News Letter, August 20, 1938

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