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"CANALS" OF MARS.

Lines on Charts May Be Due to Physiological Influences.

Although the planet Mars is not now well placed for direct scrutiny, some of the questions excited by past observations are still provoking discussion. In Knowledge, a periodical founded by the late Richard Proctor, two astronomers give reason for regarding with skepticism most of the talk about "canals." One of the writers is M. Antoniadi, an assistant of M. Flammarion, and the other is E. Walter Maunder, at one time president of the British Astronomical association. While conceding that a limited portion of the linear markings have an objective reality, both of these writers give reasons for thinking that the majority of them, as charted by Schiaparelli and Lowell, are not genuine.

For one of the objections now offered the astronomers are indebted to an English amateur, Mr Green. He pointed out some time ago that in drawing the vague boundary between two areas of slightly different color, gray and orange, there was a tendency to emphasize unduly the contrast and to make the border darker than it should be. Following up this hint, M. Antoniadi has examined Schiaparelli's charts, and finds that the distinguished Italian has intensified the shading in a large number of such places. He is convinced that fully one-half of the lines which have been introduced into the most reputable drawings of the Martin geography are the product of physiological influences alone.

Mr. Maunder brings to bear on the subject another class of testimony. Experiments have been made with a number of selected school children. Charts purported to represent the surface of Mars, but which contained no "canals," were hung on a wall to be copied. Almost invariably lines were put into the drawings which had no precedent in the originals. Some of these were introduced as borders to faintly colored and indistinct tracts, thus lending partial confirmation to Mr. Green's theory. Others were drawn between well defined spots. Finally there was a general disposition to connect with straight lines microscopic markings which had been put into the charts with studied irregularity. This last fact derives additional significance when it is learned that at least two "canals," usually represented as absolutely continuous, break up into a series of dots under careful telescopic observation.

Nutting.

The old device of jarring by a heavy stone the tree bole—especially the slim secondary trees of the deeper woods—may be trite, but not its refinement of taking a somewhat smaller stone and by a series of quick taps on the trunk "snapping" the upper branches. Less known and more effective is another plan. Its elements are a good arm, a ball of strong cord, and, attached, a half-pound stone, more or less, according to the weight of the string. The theory involves the casting of a weight over a bough of the nut tree and shaking it briskly when looped by the cord; the practice is that many a youngster who deems himself a cracker thrower on the ball field will find some lessons to be learned in the precison of "looping" a chestnut branch and in the retarding power of an ascending cord tied to a projectile. Again with usage comes the art of so releasing the cord from an upper bough as to loop the bough below and, with acquired dexterity, strip half a dozen branches after a single cast.—Outing.

Oldest-Lived Big Family.

Lutterworth, near Leicester, claims the distinction of having been the home of the longest-lived large family in the kingdom. The last member of this remarkable family has just died at the age of 88. Her name was Ruth Moore, and she was one of a family of 13 children, three of whom died at the age of 75, one at 76, one at 77, one at 80, one at 81, one at 83, two at 85, two at 88, and one at 90. Each of the parents died at 80, and the united ages of the family of 15 total 1,218 years.

Appreciation.

People seldom appreciate anything they can afford.

THE GREAT WEST.

Marvelous Recent Growth of the Trans-Mississippi Region.

Since 1850 the farms which have been opened between the Mississippi and the Pacific are almost equal to the entire land area of the original 13 states, and these are increasing rapidly, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. They will make a further large increase when the national irrigation act of 1902 gets fairly into operation. This region in 1900 produced 65.5 per cent. of the entire country's wheat, 51.1 per cent. of its corn, 78.2 per cent. of its barley, 2.7 per cent. of its buckwheat, 18.1 per cent. of its oats and 30.1 per cent. of its rye, or 53.1 per cent. of the country's cereals in the aggregate. In 1850, on the other hand, this locality produced only 9.6 per cent. of the country's cereal yield. Of the country's cattle, horses, mules, sheep, swine and other farm animals, 59.4 per cent. were found west of the Mississippi in 1900, as compared with 11.9 per cent. in 1850. This locality in 1900 produced 99.6 per cent. of the country's gold and 99.8 per cent. of its silver.

While the center of the country's area, exclusive of Alaska and the islands acquired in 1898, is in northern Kansas, the center of the country's population is in northern Indiana, and that of the country's manufactures is in Ohio. Although this region had 27.5 per cent. of the whole country's population in 1900 and furnished, in value, 43.2 per cent. of the country's farm products of all sorts the products of its manufactures (nearly half of which was furnished by Missouri, California and Minnesota) was only 16.1 per cent. of that of the entire country. But here, too, there has been an immense advance, for in 1850 this locality provided only 3.9 per cent. of the country's manufactures. This relative gain is pulling the manufacturing center westward.

This westward swing of the center of population and manufactures will be hastened by the growth in railroads, only 79½ miles of railroad, all in Louisiana, being west of the Mississippi in 1850, and 87,000 of the country's 193,000 miles being here in 1900, the proportion in this section increasing from a quarter of 1 per cent. of the country's railway mileage in 1850 to 45.2 per cent. in 1900.

OLIVE AN ANCIENT FRUIT.

Is One of the Oldest Trees Known to Scientists.

The tree Olea Europaea is not only one of the oldest trees known to naturalists, but its longevity and productivity are astounding. Several of these trees over 20 feet in circumference, according to the scientific calculation of a foot for a century, must have been bearing fruit before the Saviour walked and talked on the Mount of Olives.

The olive has been a symbol in more than one mythology. The dove bringing the branch to the ark gave it to the imagination of the orient as an emblem of peace or confidence restored. Among the Greeks it was the sign of peace and the placid power of wisdom.

Though a native of Syria, and possibly of southern Greece, the olive flourishes anywhere in a mild climate, western Asia, southern Europe, northern Africa, southern England, South America, Mexico—in all these places the olive grows readily, taking on an average seven years before bearing fruit. Two hundred years ago it was introduced into California by Catholic priests from Mexico, and there it has thriven mightily. In South Carolina it is hardy and fruitful, but, unfortunately, the crop matures there just when all labor is needed in the cotton fields.

The fruit it too bitter to eat unless pickled. Ranging in size from an acorn to a large plum, it is gathered green and placed in a strong solution of potash or lye of wood ashes. When the olives change color this denotes that the potash has struck through the stone and they are placed in water, renewed several times a day for five days.

Heroic Style.

No true novelist allows his hero to patronize an elevator if the building is equipped with a fire escape.—Chicago Daily News.

ANCIENT EGYPT.

Much History Gathered from a Single Site, Abydos.

The continuation of the work of the Egypt exploration fund at Abydos this year has given a wider view of the early civilization, of which the general lines had been fixed by the previous work on the royal tombs of the town, writes Prof. Flinders Petrie, to the London Times. The clearance of the old temple site over several acres has brought to light, in a depth of about 20 feet, no less than ten successive temples ranging in age from 5000 to 500 B. C. For the first time we can see on one spot the changes from age to age through the whole of Egyptian history. To separate these buildings was an affair of anatomy rather than spade work. The walls of mud brick were so commingled with the soil that incessant section cutting with a sharp knife was the only way to discriminate the brick work. Often only a single course of bricks or a thin bed of foundation sand was all that told of the great buildings which had existed there for centuries. Over 5,000 measurements were taken for the plans and levels.

The main result as regards the religion is that Osiris was not the original god of Abydos; the jackal god, Upuaut, and then the god of the west, Khentamenti, were honored here down to the twelfth dynasty. The most striking change is seen about the fourth dynasty, when the temple was abolished, and only a great hearth of burned offerings is found, full of votive clay substitutes for sacrifices. This exactly agrees with the account of Herodotus that Cheops had closed the temples and forbidden sacrifices. This materializing of history is made the more real by finding an ivory statuette of Cheops of the finest work, which shows for the first time the face and character of the great builder and organizer who made the Egyptian government and civilization what it was for thousands of years after. This carving is now in the Cairo museum.

The discoveries of the civilization of the first dynasty, the beginning of the kingdom, expand what we already had from my work in the royal tombs. Of Menes, the founder, we have part of a large globular vase of green glaze with his name inlaid in purple; thus polychrome glazing is taken back thousands of years before it was previously known to exist. The free use of great tiles of glaze for wall coverings shows how usual the art was then. In the highest art of delicate ivory carving there are several pieces of this age; especially the figure of an aged king, for its subtlety and character stands in the front rank of such work, comparable to the finest carvings of Greece or Italy. We must now reckon the earliest monarchy as the equal of any later age in such technical and fine art.

Pottery of forms and material quite unknown in Egypt also belong to this remote age; and it proves to be identical with that in Crete of the late neolithic age. This fresh connection illustrates the trade and the chronology of that period. A head of a camel modeled in pottery takes back its relation to Egypt some 4,000 years; hitherto no trace of it had appeared before Greek times. An ivory carving of a bear extends also the fauna of early Egypt.

The great fort long known as the Shunet ez Zehibis now connected with the remains of another fort, which was discovered between that and the Coptic Deir, which is in a third fort. These buildings prove now to have been the fortified residences of the kings of the second dynasty, whose sealings we have found in dwelling rooms.

Of a later age may be noted some large decrees of the fifth and sixth dynasties, the oldest example of iron yet known, which is of the sixth dynasty, and in the eighteenth dynasty, a great memorial tablet of the grandmother of that line, and the remains of a cliff temple of the type of Deir el Bahri. These are but the salient points of a winter's work of much historical interest. The collection will be exhibited as usual at University college, Gower street, from July 1 to 25.

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