

The Thrill of Exploring the Past

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Mystery, slender clues, sitting in evidence, third degree facts from a laboratory test tube, deduction by the stars, imprint casts, treasures in caves, unknown coals, languages.

All the standard devices of thrilling mystery stories stand revealed as the very stuff of the unrelenting explorations into the human race's checkered past.

"Every good explorer of our racial past must be a Sherlock Holmes," says a bulletin from the Washington, D. C., headquarters of the National Geographic society.

"Did Monsieur Lecoq ever turn a neater trick, for example, than Mariette?"

The Mystery of the Sphinxes

"While Mariette was in Alexandria looking for Coptic manuscripts he noticed some sphinxes in the gardens of wealthy officials. Later he saw similar sphinx figures at Giza and Cairo, and the idea came to him that they might have been brought from a single ruin. But where?"

"Then while walking near Saqqara, Egypt, he found a sphinx half buried in sand. Suddenly he remembered Strabo and a paragraph written by that Greek geographer two thousand years ago: 'One finds also (at Memphis) a temple of Serapis in a spot so sandy that the wind causes the sand to accumulate in heaps, under which we could see many sphinxes.' Mariette dug this up and found an inscription. This was it! This was Strabo's Memphis. This was the Egyptian Serapium where the sacred bulls were buried with a funeral worthy of a Pharaoh. Gathering workmen Mariette stripped off the sand and revealed an avenue of 141 sphinxes leading to the massive but deserted houses in a quarter of a mile of miles."

Reading the Maya Calendar

"Another remarkably clever piece of scientific detection closer home only last year released the secret of the Maya calendar."

"Although Yucatan was the home of the Mayas, the first clue to their writings was discovered in 1863 in the dusty archives of a Madrid library; the first real advance in solving the enigma came at Liverpool in 1896; important contributions were accomplished within the last twenty years at Washington, D. C.; and the final interpretation of Mayan history in terms of day for day, and even hour for hour, was worked out last year."

"Dr. Morley, in Washington, linked the Maya and Christian calendars running back to 600 B. C., with the possible error of about a month and, in 1927, predicted the elimination of that error by an appeal to astronomy. By studying the phases of the planet, Venus which were used for time-fixing by the Mayas, Dr. Spinden, of Harvard, finally worked up the 'Maya Calendar Case' 63 years after it was first propounded."

"Dead languages have always puzzled archaeologist detectives. Egyptian hieroglyphics were just so many mystifying sketches until the Rosetta stone came to light. And numerous scholars over a period of 230 years concentrated on cuneiform writing before the key to the Sumerian language was found and could be used to unlock the clay tablet library at Ashurbanipal and the vast literature of man's earliest, well developed civilization. Then with one thrust the long awaited discovery opened the door to 3000 more years of man's history."

Deciphering an Ancient Billboard

"A tough job for anyone to check on was the cuneiform 'arrow head' text Pietro del Valle copied in 1621 and brought back from the ruins of Persepolis in Persia. After two hundred years the scholars had made a little progress on it; they found that Darius, Hystaspes, and Xerxes were the subjects of the paragraphs in cuneiform. They found that they were working with a syllabic writing like shorthand. Slowly the case moved on until the most interesting cipher hunter of them all, Major Henry Rawlinson, went after it."

"What detective in fiction is more intriguing than this amateur philologist, using up his annual leave sitting on the hot sands at Behistan with field glasses pressed to his eyes. He drops the glasses a moment and makes curious lines on a paper; once again he trains the lenses on the red cliff before him. High up an ancient tyrant has carved an eternal billboard of his own in progress and time. Altho he illustrated his self-advertisement his poster was a 'top.' Nobody could read it. Still Rawlinson's curiosity was aroused and so he sat on the sand scrupulously copying cuneiform bold into type hoping to discover what the ruling king was trying to shout across the millenniums. After a year's study of his copybook Rawlinson sent to London a translation of the first two paragraphs containing the name, titles and genealogy of Darius the Great."

"Darius' generous remarks on the subject of himself were not nearly so significant as Rawlinson's solving of the Sumerian cuneiform ciphers. With Rawlinson's key Smith went to clay tablets found in the Euphrates Valley and read from them the story of a flood like that recounted in the Bible and another story of a baby in the bullrushes closely parallel to Moses' experience. Then in tracks on the tablets revealed the Hamarabi, God of the first recorded laws and also the business letters, deeds and marriage contracts of Akkad's people."

Cave of Mummies from Empty Tombs

"Sometimes the Sherlock Holmes sort of subtle, mind-bending explorations are as effective as a strong arm, pre-emptive tactics, type. Superficial degree methods once forced a confession that revealed the most astonishing Pharaoh mummy cache in Egypt. In 1881 the appearance of ancient papyrus in the former stalls gave hint that some native had made an important discovery. Suspicion fell on a certain Ahmed Hassan, who, when the governor had carried on an investigation with his habitual severity, dating, he might fix the age,

(probably a beating on hands and feet with a stick) meekly led an archaeologist to an obscure shaft entrance, the well of an unfinished tomb for Queen Astenkheh. Within in, the scientist came upon a cache of mummies with the limbs of early Egypt. The mummies from many empty Pharaoh tombs, that had been secretly removed to this out-of-the-way pit after a tomb-robbing scandal had alarmed of officials 2000 years ago.

"Then there is young Casteret with an expedition in 1922. The scene's sake which struck him in a thriller only if some alibi would be the leading figure. Casteret was exploring a cave in southern France, hoping to find the dwelling place of cave-men known to have lived in the region 20,000 years back. He penetrated the grotto until the stream running through it touched the roof. Were there beyond the blockade, more galleries which might have been attainable in the Ice Age? He resolved to find out. Taking a deep breath Casteret dived into the cave stream and soon found another passage. Later he swam through again with candles and lanterns in a rubber cap. His diving was doubly rewarded, for there, shut in a chamber of a cave bear, he found the statue of a cave bear; the largest prehistoric statue ever discovered and in the clay bear's flanks were the spear incisions by which the cave-men showed what they would do to any bear that tried to invade their homes."

"Sifting Evidence" at Pueblo Bonito

"Of course when a detective, in or out of a book, speaks of sifting the evidence, he speaks figuratively, but the archaeologist literally sifts. At Pueblo Bonito 100,000 tons of mud and rock from the ruins were put through the sieve. Carter and Carnahan moved debris shovels by shovel for 14 years before they fell on the tomb of Tatanakhamon."

"Tombs that were Nimrah and Dr. archaeologists have passed through screens which gave up emeralds, gold beads, carved ivory, and other things. It was surprising which gave evidence to the National Geographic society, capped last year at Pueblo Bonito of the lost culture of the plants grown, of toys the children played with and of the perches to which the sacred chickens were chained."

"In the refuse piles of vanished cities the explorer sifts out bits of broken pottery and glass, and from the sweepings of a dead people he learns how and when they lived."

"Calendars in tree rings have been used in a delicately drawn scheme to reconstruct the scene of Pueblo Bonito's site. This question was how long ago did an Italian people live in the big prehistoric apartment house in Arizona. Leg supports found in the ruins have Dr. Neil M. Judd an idea. If he could match rings of log cross-sections with other bits of known

Chevrolet Popular With Serra Pilgrimage Leaders



A new Chevrolet convertible cabriolet which is being used in preparation for the coming annual Serra Pilgrimage by two of the young ladies who are to take active parts. The fiesta, which is to be held in Monterey next month, is in honor of Father Junipero Serra, founder of many of the California missions. The Chevrolet is shown in front of the first theatre in California which still stands in old Monterey.

Working with Dr. A. E. Douglass he traced back the tree calendar through the oldest living trees, then through cross-sections of logs in modern pueblos which had been salvaged by the Indians from broken down Spanish missions. Still two gaps in the ring years remained. But one of them has now been closed and the explanation is hopeful of closing the other soon. The search, discouraging at times, spread over a period of six years, but it may at last yield by tree 'prints' the exact year some ten centuries ago when the last of the Bonitas fled from their monumental communal home."

FOUR SPEEDS FOR CARS EXPLAINED

"How can a four-speed transmission accomplish all the various improvements in motoring that are obtained for it?"

J. O. Grey of the Crater Lake Automotive company, representing Graham-Paige here, says that this is the question he is most frequently asked about the new line of automobiles, and sums up its answer as follows:

"The four-speed transmission, as modernized by the name of internal gearing for third speed, is the one device that not only gives the advantages of a fast gear axle but, in addition, actually improves the pickup and hill-climbing ability."

"The third speed, because of the silence and efficiency of the internal gearing, is virtually an alternative direct drive, yet gives the increasing pulling power of a heavy gear."

Transmission Problem Solved

The old-fashioned four-speed transmission was not acceptable to the American motorist because of its noise and low efficiency of its spur gears. The use of internal gears eliminates these drawbacks and brings to motoring an entirely new satisfaction in performance. In fact, the transmission problem has been solved—what was formerly regarded by many motorists

as the one remaining drawback to pleasurable motoring has become instead a positive advantage."

A more detailed analysis will explain how the improved transmission benefits the car and the driver.

Advantages in Third Gear

The transmission itself, because of its internal gear construction, gives the following advantages in third speed:

Quiet operation—The gear teeth approach at a very slight angle and mesh with a sliding contact.

Longer life—The gears are in constant mesh, hence are not subjected to destructive clashing, chipping and stripping.

Increased efficiency—This form of gearing has very low frictional losses, delivering 98 per cent of the power received.

Fast of control—Changes of speed from fourth to third or from third to fourth can be made with facility under any driving conditions normally calling for a change of gears.

Advantages in Direct Drive

But greater advantages of the new drive are evident in fourth speed, which is direct drive.

Because of the higher geared line and of consumption lower, because the engine makes fewer revolutions as with the average gear ratio, and moreover operates without attaining speeds that cause destructive vibration and severe stresses. Riding ease is increased greatly because of the reduced noise, rattle and vibration.

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