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Studying Earthquakes

An exhaustive study of earthquakes in and near one American continent is being made by the United States weather bureau in co-operation with the coast and geodetic survey, the Canadian meteorological officials, a number of universities and about 5,000 volunteer observers. Among the university records which are proving of great value are those kept by Father Tondorf, in charge of the seismological laboratory at Georgetown University, Washington.

William J. Humphreys, professor of meteorological physics, has charge of the weather bureau's work. The purpose of the study, he said, primarily is to determine the exact locations of breaks and cracks in the earth's crust, and to gain knowledge of the substructure of the land, although it is hoped eventually to develop a method by which earthquakes may be forecast and their danger minimized.

Only a persistent study, in the opinion of Father Tondorf, can lead to a scientific basis of forecasting earthquakes.

"The geography of earthquakes," he said, "is certain and invariable. No earthquakes can happen except at lines of weakness in the earth's crust. Evidently these lines of weakness can only give when the stresses brought to bear on them become sufficiently great. Geological changes, discernible at the surface and within reach of mathematical computation, might presage fairly accurately the release of such stresses. On the basis that these releases of stresses do not happen suddenly but gradually, suitably installed pendula might betray these displacements."

The value of the earthquake data being accumulated by the weather bureau, Prof. Humphreys pointed out, is revealed chiefly in its application to large engineering under takings, particularly water supply systems.

Earthquakes of sufficient intensity to make a clear record upon seismological instruments. Professor Humphreys explained, are located approximately, if not exactly, by comparing observations at various widely scattered points and studying different types of vibrations resulting from the breaking or slipping of a section of the earth's crust.

Father Tondorf said a theory worked out by Dr. Omori, head of the Imperial Earthquake Investigation Committee, who died recently, had a fair test in the recent Japanese catastrophe. Dr. Omori, from data extending over a period of 75 years, noted that when the lesser earthquakes were more frequent, disastrous ones were less likely to happen, and vice versa.

Dr. Omori interpreted these smaller movements of the crust as so many factors in establishing equilibrium in seismic areas. Having ascertained that the period of these lesser manifestations in Japan is six years, he predicted in 1921 that within six years after 1921 there would occur a destructive quake.

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Free Visit to War Graves Suggested

NEW YORK, Dec. 10 (Can. Press).—"Gold star" mothers whose sons are buried in French cemeteries will be given an opportunity to visit their graves if the government approves resolutions adopted by the Gold Star Association of America. The resolutions suggest that the government offer free transportation to France to either the mother, father or wife of each American soldier buried in France, and say: "This would be received universally as a fitting recognition of the sacrifice made by them for their country's cause, and also as a token of the nation's gratitude."

Church Founded in 685

The Church of Allhallows, Barking, near the Tower of London, celebrated the other day its 1,238th birthday, for it was founded in the year 685 by Bishop Erkenwald, and by him committed to the charge of the Abbesses of Barking in Essex. This is one of the London churches which escaped the great fire of 1666. Samuel Pepys, in his "Diary" for Sept. 5 of that year, tells how the fire "only burned the dial of Barking Church, and part of the porch, and was there quenched." The bodies of persons executed on Tower Hill were sometimes buried, if only temporarily, in Allhallows.

Have you sent in your entry for the THREE FLOWERS Talcum contest? Competition soon closing. Someone will get the twenty dollars for CHRISTMAS gift. —dec14

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CHRISTMAS GIFTS

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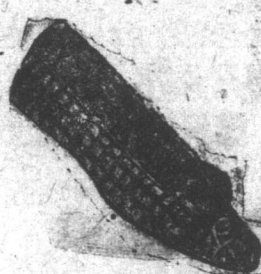
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