THE SCIENTIFIC American Supplement for Feb. 28th might prove interesting:

Statues, friezes, etc., of earthen and stone are a physical deterioration encountered as soon as the article is exposed to the air which is evidenced in a crumbling, a formation of cracks, and a falling of fine dust from the surface of the specimen. Often valuable tablets of cuneiform inscriptions have been destroyed or an archeological point of view by this action. During burial, many of the specimens become imbedded with such salts as sodium chloride and sulphate, gypsum and the like, and on exposure to the varying humidity of the atmosphere an alternate solution and crystallization of these salts occur giving rise to destructive etrains within the material.

The remedy consists merely of removing the troublesome salts by a long-protracted leaching with pure water. Until the analysis of the solution shows the remaining salts to be negligible. Some limestone blocks from an Egyptian tomb were leached for three years by this process. The water was renewed frequently at first but later once per week. This leaching process is by no means an easy one and many precautions must be taken if a good specimen, free from future deterioration, is to be obtained.

On the other hand, the deterioration of metal objects is of a chemical nature, usually a form of rusting. In the case of iron, while the nature of ordinary rusting and the proper remedies have been known for some time, it has been found only recently that rust, and less so, the salt professors must be taken if a good specimen, free from future deterioration, is to be obtained.

A remedy is to be found in an ordinary or electrolytic leaching and a subsequent coating of the surface with a special finish.

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An interesting deterioration. The ordinary this bluish-green coating is volatile and is known as "noble" patina. Another form of this metal disease is called "wild" patina and it exhibits its symptoms in a rapid and destructive corrosion which rapidly eats the metal away. It is caused by the combined action of the chlorides impre-sented from the soil and the air. A remedy is to be found in an ordinary or electrolytic leaching and a subsequent coating of the surface with a special finish.

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A remedy is to be found in the ordinary protective treatment of metal baths in hot baths at petroleum varnish, and which keep the corroding chlorides to a minimum. The grosser part of the rust may be removed by mechanical means and by solution in weak acids and the thin films are removed in an electrolytic cell. The surface is then coated with a protective film with the proper result being a conversion from the metal to the non-metallic state. It is a curious fact that this action cannot take place at temperatures less than 18 degrees Centigrade. Of course the cabinet containing the specimen should be kept tight and it should also contain sticks of carbon dioxide. Some authorities even recommend that the cabinets be kept filled with inert nitrogen. From these facts it is evident that science is endeavoring to preserve these unattainable relics which archeologists are continually unearthing to enrich our knowledge of ancient peoples.

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