

August 2, up to 80 for August 9. In Georgia, the number of new cases remains the same, 71. Four other southern states report increases: Tennessee, from 13 to 31; Kentucky, from 7 to 13; North Carolina, from 0 to 10; and South Carolina from 5 to 16. In Florida, the number went down from 27 to 13.

Minnesota is suffering the double trouble of a sleeping sickness (encephalitis) outbreak and infantile paralysis. The infantile paralysis cases jumped in the week ending August 9 from 3 cases to 12.

Many more victims were claimed in Minnesota by sleeping sickness, which has crossed the river from neighboring North Dakota. These cases nearly doubled in number in the week ending August 9. The jump was from 35 to 65.

Dr. Charles Armstrong, disease fighter of the U. S. Public Health Service, has been rushed to Minneapolis where he will advise the Minnesota state health authorities in connection with laboratory tests and identification of the disease in that state.

Colorado also reports an increase in sleeping sickness from 3 cases to 9.

In states in the east central part of the country, infantile paralysis cases are increasing, but the situation there is nothing like as bad as it is in the South. New York reports an increase from 12 to 30 cases; New Jersey, from 5 to 13; Pennsylvania from 15 to 17; Ohio, 16 to 27; Indiana, 5 to 12, and Michigan, 8 to 10.

In New England, where slight increases during the week ending August 2 led health officials to fear the outbreak might be spreading, reports were reassuring. A total of only 7 cases were reported for this whole region for the week of August 9, as compared with 16 for the previous week.

Science News Letter, August 23, 1941

PSYCHOLOGY

Let Children Read Comics; Science Gives Its Approval

Wild Adventures of "Strip" Heroes Called Folklore Of Modern Times, Using New Fantastic Magic

LET the children read the "funnies." Comics provide the folklore of this modern age.

Science finds that children need the lurid, blood-and-thunder adventures of Superman, Buck Rogers, the Bat Man, Flash Gordon, Popeye or the Red Comet, and their magic triumphs over space, time and gravity.

To two psychiatrists, specialists in the mental troubles of children, Dr. Lauretta Bender and Dr. Reginald S. Lourie, of Bellevue Hospital, New York University Medical School and the New York State Psychiatric Institute, popular comic strips are fairy tales dressed up in modern fashion.

In old fairy tales, the hero carried a wand with which he could achieve the impossible.

Magic in the comics of today is expressed in terms of fantastic elaborations of science with all-powerful rays, cosmic waves, flames, mechanized forms of transportation such as interplanetary traffic systems and so-called solar forces by which gravity is overcome.

But the old magic powers of capes and caps are retained in the most modern of the adventure comics, it is pointed out.

"The greater magic needed in modern folklore is due," say these psychiatrists in the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, "to the greater dangers which assail society and the individual and which are often obscure due to scientific

perfections, mechanized life, and group organizations."

Normal, well-balanced children are not upset by even the more horrible scenes in the comics as long as the reason for the threat of torture is clear and the issues are well stated.

When a child is puzzled by any lack of clarity, Drs. Bender and Lourie urge that an adult talk over the difficulty with him. This can be done, they reassure you, whether or not the adult has read the comic.

At Bellevue Hospital, they are now experimenting with a special class where the teacher clears up extremely common misinterpretations not only of comics but also of movies and radio stories.

Even the obviously emotionally unstable child should not be deprived of the possible benefits he will gain from reading the comics, these psychiatrists advise. Such children will find in the adventures of their favorite heroes the working out of their own problems and the answers to their own puzzling questions of right and wrong in this troubled world.

They tell the story of Tess, a little girl of great personal charm, who nevertheless was sent to Bellevue because of her antagonism to authority and because she had threatened suicide. Little Tess was troubled because her father had killed someone and later had killed himself after a quarrel with Tess's mother. Tess felt closely connected with her father and believed that she must follow in his footsteps.

In the hospital, Tessie was an omnivorous reader of comics and imagined her-

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● Earth Trembles

Information collected by Science Service from seismological observatories resulted in the location by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Jesuit Seismological Association of the following preliminary epicenter:

Friday, Aug. 15, 1:09.3 a.m., EST

About 600 miles northwest of Dakar, 200 miles north of the Cape Verde islands. Near latitude 20 degrees north, longitude 24 degrees west. Strong shock, in a region not usually regarded as seismic.

For stations cooperating with Science Service, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Jesuit Seismological Association in reporting earthquakes recorded on their seismographs, see SNL, July 19.



self in the place of her favorite characters. Even in taking medicine, she expected to receive the magic powers some of the characters acquired from a "miracle pill."

This was encouraged by the hospital staff for "constant reading of comic books had the effect of diluting her conflicts over her close tie to her father, since over and over again good fought evil in the stories and always triumphed."

As Tessie put it, "the funnies do my imagining for me."

Science News Letter, August 23, 1941

ZOOLOGY

Apes Have Preferred Hand; Half Are "Southpaws"

CHIMPANZEES, like their human relatives, have one hand they would rather use than the other. Right-handed animals and "southpaws" were just about equally numerous in 30 animals tested by Dr. Glen Finch at the Yale Laboratories of Primate Biology.

For the test, each chimpanzee was isolated where he could not "ape" other animals, Dr. Finch said in describing the experiment. (*Science*, Aug. 1.) The animal had to reach through a two-inch square hole in the wire netting of the cage to get the piece of luscious fruit he saw there. The experimenter stood ready to snatch it away quickly in case the chimp reached with a foot or his lips, or grabbed greedily with both hands.

Eighteen of the animals used one hand consistently in more than 90% of the 800 trials given. Of these, nine were right-handed and nine left-handed.

Twenty-five out of the 30 animals tested used the same hand in 80% (640) of the trials. Of these a little more than half (14) were left-handed.

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CHEMISTRY

Wax For Polishes May Come From Green Cotton

Scientists of U. S. Department of Agriculture, Collaborating With Chemical Company, Studying Field

WAX for use in polishes, to supplement overseas supplies now threatened with war shortages, may be obtained from a freak variety of cotton that is green instead of white. Scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, collaborating with a chemical company interested in waxes, are now surveying possibilities. The company has five acres of the green-lint cotton growing in South Carolina now, for experimental purposes.

All cotton contains a little wax, but the ordinary varieties grown for fiber contain only about one-half of one per cent. The green variety, known as Arkansas Green Lint, sometimes yields as much as 17%. Its staple spins well, but the wax content is so high that the yarn cannot be dyed unless specially treated.

Best possibilities, however, seem to be in growing the cotton primarily for the wax. This is regarded as promising because it is hard to melt, a property in demand by manufacturers of polishes for shoes, furniture, floors and automobiles. It is estimated that under average growing conditions a wax yield worth close to \$20 an acre should be possible. The lint remaining after wax extraction is a high-grade cellulose suitable for use in plastics, rayon and similar products.

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When completed, the *hydro-electric* plant of Grand Coulee Dam will have a capacity of 1,920,000 kilowatts, which is one-twelfth of the electric power now generated in the United States.

New Ways of War

by Tom Wintringham

"A terrifying—and fascinating—book", says Lewis Gannett.

This is the handbook which is being used by millions of England's Local Defence Volunteers. Tom Wintringham, poet, short-story writer and soldier of fortune, fought in World War I, commanded the British Battalion of the International Brigade in Spain, and during the last two years organized the People's Army of citizen soldiers of misfortune for Hitler.

Highlights of the book are Wintringham's forthright ideas on:

"Petrol war" replacing "Railway war" . . . development of the elastic defense and attack by infiltration . . . the myth of the man on horseback . . . the myth of the fox-hunting gentleman as a natural leader in war . . . the myth of the bayonet . . . why a democratic government can defeat a totalitarian government in war . . . the basic weakness of the German army . . . how to meet dive-bombers . . . how to stop tanks . . . how to stop motorecyclists . . . how to train soldiers . . . the value of a People's Army . . . how to arm it . . . how to make your own hand grenades . . . how to stop parachutists. . . .

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