

PSYCHIATRY

Woman Cures Depression By Putting Bullet in Brain

Attempted Suicide Causes Loss of Eye, But Worry Over Painful Arthritis and Weeping Disappeared

HOW a despairing woman cured herself of her depression by the heroic treatment of putting a bullet through her brain is disclosed by Dr. Zigmond M. Lebensohn, of George Washington University Medical School and St. Elizabeth's Hospital. The bullet is still lodged in her brain, but she has recovered and her depression has been replaced by care-free laughter.

Mrs. M, 49-year-old wife of a Washington professional man, whose name is withheld by Dr. Lebensohn, had been worried over a very severe attack of painful arthritis.

She couldn't sleep. She began to drink and smoke too much. She took veronal.

She cried frequently and brooded over the idea of suicide. She even tried it once by taking an overdose of morphine.

Finally, there was a quarrel with her husband over some trivial issue, and Mrs. M. pressed a .25 caliber pistol close to her forehead and shot herself.

She was rushed to the hospital, where X-rays showed that the bullet had torn a path nearly all the way through the frontal lobes of her brain and had looped around and become imbedded over her left eye. Cerebrospinal fluid was pouring out her nose. Her right eye became enormously swollen and pro-

jected. It was necessary to remove it.

Five weeks later she went home. Her depression was gone. But she was so unstable and drank so badly that she was sent to St. Elizabeth's mental hospital.

Although Mrs. M. had shown no abnormal neurological signs immediately after her injury, when she entered St. Elizabeth's two months and eight days later, she had several symptoms of nerve impairment. These disappeared, however.

Now she is a composed woman who takes good care of her home. Psychological tests, Dr. Lebensohn said in reporting the case (*American Journal of Psychiatry*, July) "indicate childishness, facetiousness and extroversion with no evidence of any organic change in her intellectual status."

Her indulgence in alcohol persisted after her return home and she would smuggle whisky past the maids and housekeepers by various strategies. But almost two years after the shooting, she had a single convulsive attack during which she had eight severe seizures in a row.

This scared her into cutting down on her alcohol.

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that protrudes from the heads of diseased plants. These fruiting bodies are harvested by hand, and the active principle, an alkaloid known as ergotoxine, is extracted from them.

The studies of the three Minnesota pharmacologists indicate that American rye ergot yields more of the essential alkaloid than Spanish rye ergot, but that ergot from American wheat is less rich in ergotoxine than the Spanish rye material.

Imported capsicum, source of an exceedingly hot drug used externally in liniments and plasters and internally (but sparingly!) as a medicine in digestive disturbances, can be replaced by domestic tabasco peppers, Miss Carmel R. Olden and Prof. E. V. Lynn of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy told the meeting.

In preparing the familiar condiment, tabasco sauce, the seeds and hulls of the peppers are commonly discarded, yet the two researchers found that these wastes are as rich in the essential principle, capsaicine, as any other part of the plant. They proposed that tabasco peppers replace imported capsicum as official source of the drug, because the latter is now difficult to obtain and apparently offers no advantages in medicine.

Strychnine from American-grown sources is a possibility suggested to the meeting by Dale L. Kinsely of North Dakota Agricultural College. Strychnine is extracted from shrubby plants of the genus *Strychnos*, one species of which, *Strychnos spinosa*, has been grown successfully in Florida since 1903. Mr. Kinsely's researches have been directed at both the botany and the chemistry of this plant.

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PHARMACY

American Drug Plants Studied As Replacements For Imports

AMERICAN drug plants are being studied as possible replacements for similar drugs that used to be imported but are now cut off, or at least threatened, by the war, the American Pharmaceutical Association was informed at its meeting in Detroit, by members who have been conducting such researches. In some instances, satisfactory replacement plants are already in sight.

Ergot, a powerful drug used in check-

ing bleeding after childbirth, can be produced in as high quality from American-grown material as it can from the Spanish imports, it is indicated in tests reported by H. W. Youngken, Jr., E. B. Fischer and Dr. C. H. Rogers of the University of Minnesota.

Ergot is a parasitic fungus that preys upon grain. The part used in medicine is the hard, purple fruiting body, shaped like an exaggerated wheat or rye grain,

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The United States is producing about 12 times as much gasoline as in the first World War.