



German Dust Bowls

GERMANY seems to have made, in this war, one of the same mistakes we made in the last one, though to be sure on a smaller scale. In 1917 the cry was raised in this country, "Food will win the war!" Western farmers were encouraged to break up grasslands until then unplowed, to raise wheat for our associates in the struggle. A few years after the Armistice came drought and dust storms.

An editorial writer in the German conservation journal, *Natur und Kultur*, laments the draining of swamps and bogs, the clearing of heaths and moors, and the "improvement" of rivers, which were undertaken on a wholesale scale after the establishment of Nazi power as parts of the national campaign for agricultural self-sufficiency. Warning voices were disregarded.

Wasteland clearance was one of the favorite projects of the *Arbeitsdienstkorps*, German equivalent to our Civilian Conservation Corps. They did a Teutonically thorough job of destroying trees and bushes, draining swamps, and lowering the water table under wet streamside lands. All this blossomed into grain or hay fields, or truck farms raising vegetables for the cities.

In even shorter time than it took for nature's Nemesis to overtake similar indiscretions in this country, the penalty began to be exacted. German summers since 1938 have had rather pronounced dry spells. The light, peaty soils of the drained swamps have gone with the wind.

To be sure, the areas affected are not great as compared with the one-time Dust Bowl of this country, but in a

land of the relatively limited extent of the Reich they loom much larger. Also the dust storms themselves, reaching heights of only a couple of hundred yards, are as nothing compared with our black blizzards, that climbed miles into the air and swept from the Plains to the Atlantic. But again, in a land with so little soil to spare, every lost acre counts heavily.

Science News Letter, September 13, 1941

PSYCHOLOGY

Inkblot Test Shows How Alcohol Affects Character

Practically Every Trait Known to Man Is Found In Alcoholics, But None Is Characteristic

SCIENTISTS now have a "pink elephant" test to measure the effect of alcohol on your character. To aid you in "seeing things" they let you look at fancifully shaped inkblots in black and in colors.

Anyone, drunk or sober, can see pictures in these vague shapes. But just what he sees, whether spider, dancing girl, witch or cloud of smoke, reveals to the psychologist what sort of person he is.

Alcohol, which may make the victim see all sorts of things on a perfectly blank wall, nevertheless was found to have no characteristic effect on personality as revealed by the inkblot test. This was true of chronic alcoholics tested while sober as well as of normal individuals tested while in a condition of "acute mild intoxication."

The experiment on chronic alcoholics was the work of Dr. Robert V. Seliger and Dr. Seymour J. Rosenberg, psychiatrists of the Johns Hopkins University.

While many alcoholics are alike in

some respects, there is no distinctive "alcoholic personality," they conclude.

The chronic alcoholic, they found from a study of 30 patients, is nearly always emotionally immature. About half are neurotic. Most are rigid, restricted personalities.

Practically every trait known to man can be found among alcoholics, they believe. But no pattern of personality is distinctive of the chronic alcoholic alone. The following motivations seem to them to be significant, however:

A self-pampering tendency. An urge for self-expression without the determination to translate the urge into action. An abnormal craving for emotional experiences which call for removal of intellectual restraint. Powerful hidden ambitions without resolve to take practical steps for attainment. A tendency to flinch from worries. An unreasonable demand for continuous happiness or excitement. An insistent craving for the feeling of self-confidence, self-importance, calm and poise.

At New York State Psychiatric Institute, Dr. Douglas McG. Kelley and Dr. C. Eugene Barrera found that alcohol does produce a change in personality, but what sort of change it is differs with the individual. There is no one sort of performance on the inkblot test that could be used as a test of intoxication.

Drinkers are of two types, these psychiatrists report in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. Some relax and accept their emotional feelings and symptoms. The others struggle against them.

Regardless of the original personality type of the drinker, the one who fights

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the effect of the alcohol will, when mildly intoxicated, become very careful of what he says and does.

The one who enjoys the feeling of intoxication will become more friendly and suggestible.

There is no way to predict the per-

sonality changes that alcohol will produce, the investigators say. Apparently the only way to determine which of the different effects alcohol will have on a particular individual is to give him a drink.

Science News Letter, September 13, 1941

RESOURCES

British in Persia Owe Oil To Man Who Risked His Skin

Lively Adventures Are Recounted in Published Diary Of Sir Arnold Wilson Who Took the Arabs' Dares

CLINCHING a wartime grip on the vastly important oil resources of Persia, the British can give special thanks to a daring and tough-skinned Britisher, Sir Arnold Wilson, who years ago scouted for Persia's oil.

Sir Arnold's lively adventures, the milder of which include sleeping on the ground (the better to hear rifle shots), wading naked in marshes, and riding horseback 100 miles in one day to a business appointment, are told in a timely publication of his diary in England. Soberly titled, *South-West Persia. A political officer's diary, 1907-1914*, the volume brings back an era when most of southwest Persia had never been traversed by a surveyor.

In his first year, Sir Arnold roamed 3,000 miles of Persia on horseback and on foot. The next year, his government made him acting consul at Mohammerah near the Persian Gulf. But his surveying went on. The island where the big Abadan refineries now stand, not far from his headquarters, was one place where he worked, profitably.

To win confidence and respect of tribes through whose mountain and desert country he must travel, Wilson did anything that an Arab would, and things that an Arab wouldn't. Wilson once leaped a 15-foot chasm over a river flowing 50 feet below, when Arabs, who were supposed to dare this leap, held back. The Wilson leap won prestige.

Shooting an ibex at 600 feet was another Wilson stunt which made friends and influenced a prejudiced tribe.

When Wilson was given a detachment of Bengal lancers to guard drillers at an oil concession, he met a soldier problem in characteristic fashion. The troops grumbled over some new equipment.

Too heavy, they said. Wilson took up the rifle and 200 rounds of ammunition and marched 34 miles through one night. In order to survey possible routes inland from Bushire on the Gulf, the hardy explorer traveled by day through August heat, to avoid trouble with thieves. The sun was too hot for the marauders, and even Wilson's wax candles melted at night, but the mapping went on.

On journeys where drinking water had to come from filthy and germ-laden cisterns, Wilson strained water through his shirt and somehow lived.

Returning home on leave, his idea of a change was to work his passage as a stoker, doing double shifts so efficiently that fellow stokers gave him a dinner. He liked that tremendously.

Science News Letter, September 13, 1941

INVENTION

Device on Golf Club Will Measure Your Swing

HOW STRONG is your golf swing? A recently patented device that can be slipped over the golf club, baseball bat, or any other club, makes it possible to determine the intensity of the swing. A weight is moved by centrifugal force against a spring, and a marker indicates the farthest point reached by the weight. (Lewis T. Stumpf, Cleveland, Ohio, Patent No. 2,244,972.)

Science News Letter, September 13, 1941

To stop hiccups, Dr. A. A. Thomen of New York suggests: hold a paper bag for a few minutes over nose and mouth of the hiccup victim, so that he can breathe in and out of the bag, and thus inhale carbon dioxide to stimulate respiratory nerve centers to stop the spasms.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Infantile Paralysis Cases Declining Over the Nation

THE INFANTILE paralysis and "sleeping sickness" or encephalitis outbreaks of the summer are about over, according to latest reports received at the U. S. Public Health Service headquarters in Washington, D. C.

With reports from all but two states in, the nation's total infantile paralysis cases were 556 for the week ending August 30, compared with 611 for the previous week. Reports from Pennsylvania and South Dakota may send the total figure up, but health officials are encouraged by the fact that southern states, which had all been reporting high figures, now all show declines in infantile paralysis and there are no significant increases and some declines in the number of cases in northern states.

For encephalitis, North Dakota reported 98 cases, compared to 120 the previous week, and Minnesota reported 51, instead of 95. South Dakota, with 38 cases the week of Aug. 23, has not reported any cases for the past week. Colorado reported 32, compared with 20 the previous week.

Science News Letter, September 13, 1941

A century ago, *potatoes* were comparatively unknown in India, but now they are one of the most widely grown vegetables of the country.

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