

## MEDICINE

# Cortisone May Aid Allergy

This is an unexplored possibility but the chemical comes from a gland which is known to react to the causes at the root of allergies.

➤ **CORTISONE**, the new and famous though scarce remedy for rheumatoid arthritis, may point the way to better treatment for hayfever, asthma and other allergies.

This suggestion comes from Dr. Louis Prickman of the Mayo Clinic of Rochester, Minn., where only four months ago Cortisone's value in rheumatoid arthritis was discovered.

Cortisone's discoverer, Dr. E. C. Kendall of the Mayo Clinic, has conferred with other scientists in New York on ways to finance further research on the drug.

Cortisone is not suggested directly as a remedy for allergies in Dr. Prickman's report. He sees its success in relieving arthritis symptoms as showing "a promising new direction for allergic research."

"Rheumatoid arthritis and allergic diseases," he points out, "have any number of features in common and the underlying mechanism may be the same."

The allergic reaction, whether it comes as hayfever, asthma, hives or a reaction to penicillin, is a defensive process, Dr. Prickman explains. It is a "warning on the part of nature" that the cells of the body have met a harmful substance.

The outer rind, or cortex, of the adrenal glands which produce the hormone now called Cortisone is known to take part in an "alarm reaction" when the body gets under fatigue and psychological stresses.

Infections, fatigue and nervous factors appear to be important causes of many of the cases of severe asthma, hives and other allergies which come on after middle age and usually without any specific cause such as a pollen, horse dander, certain foods, and the like.

This picture of allergies is the reason Dr. Prickman thinks allergy fighting might go ahead faster and more successfully by following the Cortisone—ACTH leads.

ACTH is the scientific shortname for another hormone chemical, the adrenocorticotrophic hormone. This hormone is produced by the tiny pituitary gland in the head, and acts to stimulate the adrenal gland cortex to produce its hormone. ACTH has been found as effective as Cortisone, the adrenal cortical hormone, in rheumatoid arthritis but supplies of it are just as scarce as supplies of Cortisone. At present Cortisone is being partly synthesized, starting with bile from slaughtered cattle. The synthesis is extremely complex and difficult.

Possible plant sources, from the seeds of a vine, growing of which is illegal in Africa, to the tropical yam of the western hemisphere, are now being intensively investigated.

Dr. Prickman's suggestion on Cortisone and allergies was made to a staff meeting of the Mayo Clinic and is reported in the clinic's PROCEEDINGS (Aug. 17).

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and finally grounding on Mt. Parnassus.

Deluge stories are commonly found in southern Asia, and in Central, South and North America.

Reports coming out of Armenia state that a monastery in the village of Echmiazin at the foot of Mt. Ararat has what is claimed to be a piece of petrified wood from Noah's ark, but other parts have not been found although the monks have searched for many years.

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## MEDICINE

## Hypnotism Found to Increase Muscle Power

➤ **DISCOVERY** that hypnotism can add muscle power may open up a new vista of hope for disabled veterans and polio victims, the American Congress of Physical Medicine meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, was told.

In tests made by Dr. Sedgwick Mead, assistant professor of physical medicine at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, patients gained on an average 16.8% in the strength of arm muscles when hypnotized. Their endurance capacities, however, were not affected.

Dr. Mead suggests that, based on this discovery, hypnosis may help in rehabilitating patients with injured arms and legs and in bringing back strength to polio-weakened muscles.

No applications of this method have yet been made on injured patients.

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## MEDICINE

## Allergy Linked to Cold-Susceptibility

➤ **ALLERGY** plays an important role in the susceptibility to colds, an editorial in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Sept. 10), pointed out.

This conclusion is based on the researches done by Drs. N. Fox, G. Livingston, J. W. Harned, and S. Peluse, of Chicago, who have studied over 3,000 cold-susceptible patients. Eighty percent of the first 1,200 patients studied showed an allergic condition or were from allergic families.

Here is how they believe allergy aids cold infection: Allergy may start by a fall in temperature and increase in humidity. The body responds by releasing histamine into certain shock centers such as the respiratory tract which weaken the local defense mechanism. This opens the way to attack by the cold virus or other germs.

The person susceptible to colds does not necessarily have an obvious allergy. The researchers found that this type of patient often has a borderline allergy which is mostly overlooked because the symptoms are so slight.

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## ARCHAEOLOGY

# Noah's Ark Fiction?

➤ **SCIENTISTS** in Washington suggest that those looking for Noah's ark may be in search of fiction.

Mt. Ararat has been climbed several times, and descriptions published of the peak make it very doubtful that any remains of the ark famous in Bible story will ever be found there.

Some are even doubtful that there ever was an ark in reality; it may be a symbol in ancient allegory.

The Bible account has its parallel in the ancient Babylonian traditions. In fact, the Babylonian account has such striking similarity to the Bible story that experts believe they must have had a common origin.

In each case, there is divine revelation of the coming of the deluge. Both stories relate the building of the vessel, pitching it inside and outside with pitch. In both stories, birds were sent out to test the

receding of the waters but in the Babylonian version, it was a dove, a swallow and a raven that went out in place of the three trips of the dove as in the Bible version.

In both versions, the ark came to rest on a mountain where a sacrifice was offered and in both versions it is recounted that "the Lord (or the gods) smelled a sweet savor."

An important difference in the Babylonian story is that the hero took with him into the ark not only the animals but also craftsmen of every kind so that the various skills known to man should not be lost.

In Greek legend, the king, Deucalion, was warned by his father, Prometheus, to build a chest (another meaning for the word ark) and in it he and his wife escaped from a flood, floating for nine days