

## MEDICINE

**Ant Bites Produce Collapse in Patient**

► WITHIN a few minutes of feeling ant bites, a soldier broke out in a rash and his eyes swelled almost shut. The reaction was so severe that he had to be helped to the hospital in a state of near collapse.

The case of the man who nearly succumbed in a state of shock to the bite of ants is reported by Col. Charles H. Morhouse, surgeon in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Air Force, Randolph Field, Texas, to the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Sept. 17).

By showering the patient the ants were removed and he was given oxygen to aid his breathing. Epinephrine, which stimulates the heart and relieves allergic symptoms, gave him little relief so it was necessary to give him two other drugs, the anti-allergy pyribenzamine and the local anesthetic, procaine hydrochloride, before his symptoms were relieved.

Col. Morhouse believes that either drug might have given relief but the patient's condition was so serious that it was impossible to wait to see if the pyribenzamine was effective.

At the end of two hours the rash had disappeared and the patient slept comfortably until evening when he woke fully recovered, the physician stated.

This soldier reported that he had had similar attacks of severe reaction to other insect bites.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

## PSYCHOLOGY

**Polio Does Not Change Behavior Pattern of Child**

► INFANTILE paralysis does not leave any pronounced after effects on the nervous habits or the behavior of child patients. This reassurance was given the American Psychological Association meeting in Denver, Colo., by Dr. Dale B. Harris, of the University of Minnesota, as a result of a study of 42 school children made about two years after they had had the disease. These children were compared with a similar number of others who had not had the disease.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

## MEDICINE

**Anemia from Moth Ball Poisoning Reported**

► FIRST report of moth ball poisoning causing anemia in U. S. children was made by Drs. Wolf W. Zuelzer and Leonard Apt of the Children's Hospital of Michigan and Wayne University College of Medicine in Detroit.

The physicians point out that there is

no previous report in this country of anemia caused by poisoning with moth balls (naphthalene) in children although foreign physicians have noted this occurrence. Their report appears in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Sept. 17).

Each of the patients was about two years old and had been seen sucking on moth balls. When admitted to the hospital the children were extremely ill and feverish. In each instance complete recovery followed blood transfusion and doses of sodium bicarbonate and sodium lactate for alkalization of the urine.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

## ASTRONOMY

**Fireball Over Alabama Duplicates Earlier One**

► TWO large fireballs that flashed over Alabama within a week are being chased by astronomers.

The second one was seen from Nauvoo, Ala., early Thursday evening (Sept. 7) and it was in virtually the same position and from the same direction as an even larger one that was seen on Sept. 1.

The American Meteor Society, with headquarters at the University of Pennsylvania's Flower Observatory, Upper Darby, Pa., is asking reports from anyone in northern Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky or adjacent states who saw either of these meteors from outer space blaze into the earth's atmosphere.

Both these meteors were reported by Thomas A. Scott, University of Pennsylvania student, who has been computing fireball paths as assistant to Dr. Charles P. Olivier, secretary of the Society. The Sept. 7 meteor was observed by Scott's father, H. T. Scott.

Whether the two meteors were physically related, even though they were separated by considerable time, might be determined if enough of the thousands who must have seen them will report where the fireball seemed to start and where it appeared to fall.

The fireball of Sept. 7 appeared a quarter to a third of the size of the full moon, blue-green in color, with a long yellow tail, but without an enduring smoke train.

Fireballs are believed to be debris of the solar system, bits of lost or disintegrated comets, that come into the earth's atmosphere so fast that they are heated to incandescence. Most of these meteors are consumed before they hit the ground or very small fragments are left.

Mr. Scott also observed the great fireball of June 7, 1948, which was remarkable for its long-enduring train. The path was charted through the use of over 70 observations of this meteor received as a result of newspapers publishing the Science Service report asking for observations.

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**IN SCIENCE**

## MEDICINE

**Antibiotic Cures Skin Ills Without Sensitizing Victim**

► AN antibiotic ointment which will cure skin diseases and not make the patient allergic to the chemical, was reported in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Sept. 17).

Dr. Jack L. Derzavis, Major J. Sidney Rice, and Lieut. Col. Louis S. Leland, Medical Corps, U. S. Army, patch-tested 150 patients at Walter Reed General Hospital and Gallinger Municipal Hospital in Washington, D. C., in an attempt to discover an effective antibiotic for skin diseases which would not leave the patient sensitive to the drug as penicillin and the sulfa drugs are known to do.

Bacitracin, the antibiotic discovered in the infected leg of a little girl and named for her, answered their needs. When applied in ointment form to the skin of 138 patients with various types of skin conditions, a cure resulted if the diseased area was accessible to an application of the ointment. Moreover, only one patient showed sensitivity to it and he was allergic to many other medications.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

## PSYCHOLOGY

**Special "Thought Wave" Involved in Remembering**

► WHEN you are trying to remember, your brain has a special electrical rhythm.

Kappa brain waves—those electric signals from the brain itself that are associated with thinking—are most active at that time, the American Psychological Association meeting in Denver, Colo., learned from Drs. John L. Kennedy and Robert M. Gottsdanker, of Tufts College. These psychologists are among the four who first discovered this "thought wave" last year.

The kappa brain waves were recorded for 90 normal adults while they were working at various mental tasks, including making discriminations, figuring out arithmetical computations, solving "insight" problems, reciting very well learned material, and recalling imperfectly learned material.

When you are beginning to learn a new mental task, there is very little kappa activity, it was found. The kappa waves are at their height during the recall of imperfectly learned material. They are at their low point when you are reciting very familiar material.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

# E FIELDS

## MEDICINE

### Wood Alcohol in Dead Body May Be Sign of Diabetes

► FINDING small amounts of wood alcohol in the tissues of a dead body may be a sign that the person died of previously unsuspected diabetes, not of wood, or methyl, alcohol poisoning.

The importance in crime detection of ruling out diabetes in such cases is emphasized in a report by Dr. Henry Siegel and Harry Schwartz of New York City's Chief Medical Examiner's Office to the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Sept. 17).

They discovered this in examining the body of a 15-year-old girl who died nine hours after being admitted to the hospital in a stupor. Routine analysis of the stomach contents and brain for all poisons was made. In the brain there were small amounts of a substance which gave the chemical reactions of wood alcohol. Faint traces of this substance were also found in the stomach contents.

Three color tests for wood alcohol were made on a steam distillate from the dead girl's brain. They were all positive.

Special investigation by one of the scientists as well as by the police "revealed no possible source where the girl might have obtained methyl (wood) alcohol" the scientists report.

There was no diabetes in the family, but the history of the girl's short illness and other findings in the examination of her body gave the diagnosis of diabetes.

How the methyl alcohol got into the body tissues is not known. It might have resulted from chemical breakdown of other substances and may have been part of the faulty food use in diabetes complicated by acidosis and coma. It may, though the scientists do not yet know, also be found in patients dying from other diseases complicated by acidosis.

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## MEDICINE

### New Test Tells Whether Mama Cow Will Have Baby

► A NEW test for early pregnancy in cows is announced by Dr. J. L. Bhaduri and his student, Mr. N. R. Bardhan of the University of Calcutta, Calcutta, India.

The test detects pregnancy as early as 55 days after conception, or some five weeks earlier than is now possible by other means. It may detect pregnancy in cows even earlier, but the University of Calcutta sci-

entists have not yet been able to make tests on cows earlier in pregnancy.

The test is an adaptation of the human pregnancy test in which male frogs and toads are used. In testing humans, untreated urine from the woman is injected into the frog or toad. Rapid release of spermatazca by the animal shows that the woman is pregnant. Urine from pregnant cows failed to produce this response in the male toads, but the Calcutta scientists found that solutions of cow dung, or manure, did.

The new test calls for further study, the Calcutta scientists state in their report to the Indian journal, SCIENCE AND CULTURE (Aug.), since the number of cases so far studied by them is too small to warrant definite conclusions. But they think it promises a great deal for the future, especially where artificial insemination is practiced as a routine.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

## PSYCHOLOGY

### Find People Have Natural Speed for Muscular Work

► THE popular idea that each person has his own characteristic tempo at which he works is partially confirmed by experiments reported to the American Psychological Association in Denver, Colo., by Dr. Horacio J. A. Rimoldi, Argentine psychologist, now on the faculty of the University of Chicago.

Statistical study of results of 59 tests administered individually to 91 university students showed that there is probably a natural speed for individuals which is common for most motor activities. It does not hold for other kinds of work such as speed of perception or of knowing, Dr. Rimoldi indicated.

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## VETERINARY MEDICINE

### Farmers Warned of Lead Poisoning Danger to Cows

► PAINTED surfaces are a dangerous temptation to cows as well as children.

The youngsters often chew the painted surfaces, and cows lick them.

In either case, lead poisoning may result if the paint contains lead. As a safety measure, for the cows, the American Veterinary Medical Association in Chicago warns farmers to use non-lead containing paints on interiors of cow barns and stables. The warning also says to keep cows away from fences and buildings freshly painted in the fall clean-up and not to leave old paint cans and paint-saturated rags around barnyards.

"For some reason, cows like the taste of fresh paint," the Association states.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

## MEDICINE

### Prove Mosquitoes Carry Eastern Horse Disease

► FIRST proof that mosquitoes carry the virus of a severe and often deadly disease of horses and man has been found by four researchers of the U. S. Public Health Service's communicable disease center in Atlanta, Ga.

The disease is known technically as eastern equine encephalomyelitis. The layman knows it as a "sleeping sickness" which attacks both man and horses. Very young children are often victims.

Its cause is one of two viruses, a western strain and an eastern strain.

Proof of the long-suspected role of the mosquito in carrying this virus came when the Public Health Service researchers found the virus in mosquitoes collected from farms in Burke and Jenkins Counties, Ga., where sick horses had previously been reported. Scientists have known for some time that the mosquito could be made to carry the virus in laboratory experiments, but this is the first time the eastern strain virus has been found in mosquitoes in nature.

Scientists who found the proof are: Miss Beatrice F. Howitt, Dr. H. R. Dodge, Dr. L. K. Bishop, and Miss Rachael H. Gorrie.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

## PSYCHOLOGY

### Test Word Knowledge With Series of Pictures

► A 15-MINUTE test of picture recognition tests a child's or adult's knowledge of words without requiring him to speak or write. The person tested has only to look at one of a series of plates, each containing four drawings and indicate which picture best illustrates a given word. This test has proved especially useful in testing children with speech difficulties, spastic paralysis or other handicaps which make it difficult for them to speak or write, the originators, Dr. Robert B. Ammons and Mrs. Helen S. Ammons, of Tulane University, reported to the American Psychological Association in Denver, Colo.

Some 226 words are illustrated by the four drawings appearing on each of 16 plates. A child would point out the drawing of a head-on collision when given the word "accident." An adult might select the same drawing to illustrate the word "negligence." A child would indicate the picture of a child in tears as a response to the word "crying"; an adult might respond with the same picture to the word "lachrymation."

The test has already been tried out on 480 white children, 120 white adults, 80 Spanish-American children, and 80 Negro children.

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