

and Mr. Anderson have found that selenium poisoning can be stopped by giving the animals very small amounts of arsenic, in their food or drinking water, or in the salt which ranch cattle

eagerly seek. Concentrations as low as 12 to 25 parts per million were found effective in the treatment of dogs, chickens and cattle.

Science News Letter, May 16, 1942

PSYCHOLOGY

# Sensitive Rats Made Immune To Fit-Producing Noises

## Preceding Seizure-Causing Noise With Another To Which Rats Are Not Sensitive Protects for a Week

**P**SYCHIC "vaccination" against the nerve-shattering effects of war noise is a future possibility, it is suggested by a report to the Midwestern Psychological Association meeting in St. Louis.

Noise-sensitive rats that ordinarily would be thrown into fits similar to epileptic seizures by certain shrill or irritating noises have been made immune to the seizure-producing sounds, Dr. Norman R. F. Maier, of the University of Michigan, told the meeting. The immunity lasted for several days.

The protecting treatment consisted merely of preceding each seizure-producing noise with another to which the rat is not sensitive. Continuation of this procedure with daily tests for about two weeks makes it possible to expose the rats to the seizure-producing sounds without harm.

After a week without tests, the animal is again susceptible.

Fatigue and a lowering of body temperature by swimming in cold water also prevented the seizures in all susceptible animals.

The noise-induced seizures in rats are due, Dr. Maier concludes, to nervous tensions, and if enough preparation is given the organism can adjust. In states

of low energy the tensions are not sufficient to break through and get control of the animal.

Just how closely the noise-induced fits of susceptible rats resemble the jumpy, jittery nerves produced in some humans by the explosive blasts, shrieking shells, and roaring dive bombers of modern war is not yet known to psychologists.

But the fact that a means has been found for protecting the rats by this sort of psychological immunizing process raises hope that some similar method may be developed for helping humans to protect their nerves against war damage.

Science News Letter, May 16, 1942

## Monkeys Sort By Quality

**M**ONKEYS are capable of some of the abstract thinking which has been considered an exclusive ability of humans, Dr. Benjamin Weinstein, of the University of Wisconsin, revealed.

He told of teaching a monkey to distinguish objects on the basis of their qualities, apparently working with such "human" concepts as mobility or color.

The monkey was first permitted to handle and examine pairs of objects, one of which was movable and the other fixed. Later he was shown a tray of objects containing replicas of the samples he had seen. He learned to select always the duplicate of the movable object and leave untouched the duplicate of the fixed object—regardless of position on the tray or other similarities.

Science News Letter, May 16, 1942

The presence of *lactic acid* gives sour milk its characteristic taste.

The human *thigh-bone* (femur) is the strongest, heaviest, and longest bone in the skeleton.

## RADIO

Saturday, May 23, 1:30 p.m., EWT

"Adventures in Science," with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Lionel S. Marks, professor of mechanical engineering, emeritus, of Harvard University, will discuss the main sources of power immediately and practically available in the world of today.

Tuesday, May 19, 7:30 p.m., EWT

Science Clubs of America programs over WRUL, Boston, on 6.04, 9.70 and 11.73 megacycles.

One in a series of regular periods over this short wave station to serve science clubs, particularly in the high schools, throughout the Americas. Have your science group listen in at this time.

ETHNOLOGY

## Eskimo Women Are Making Boots For Alaska Troops

**U**NDER the flickering Northern Lights of Alaska, hundreds of Eskimo women are stitching reindeer and seal-skin into the world's warmest boots for American doughboys stationed at this country's northernmost defense bases.

The Army Quartermaster Corps has arranged through the Interior Department for purchase of reindeer boots "guaranteed" to keep a soldier's feet from freezing in the Arctic snow.

The Eskimo women are the same who helped to equip the Byrd expeditions, and are at work from Nome to the northernmost Army stations.

The bottom or foot section of the boot is usually made from Oogruh or "big seal" skin, while the upper portion is of soft reindeer hide. All sewing is by hand with reindeer sinews.

In making a boot, the Eskimo women crimp the edges where seal and reindeer hide join with their teeth, which become sharp as razors and wear down to the gums.

About a year ago, the Army purchased \$15,000 worth of furs and foot-gear from these women, and found the clothes exceptionally warm, well-fitting and long-lasting.

Science News Letter, May 16, 1942



## WYOMING

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