

## Do You Know?

All of the well-known British fighting *planes* contain North American wood.

United States *railroads* rolled up about 85,000,000,000 passenger-miles in 1943.

The dried toothed *tongue* of the upper Amazon paiche, a large fish, is used as a grater in preparing foods.

California in 1942 had its largest *mineral* production since 1929; in value petroleum ranked first, cement second, gold third.

*Cattail floss* has many of the qualities of kapok and is useful in life belts and floats, heat and sound insulators, and as filling for cushions.

A pastry *flour* now used in Switzerland contains 50% dried fruit, the rest being wheat flour, fruit and other sugars, nuts and skim milk.

*Nail-making* in colonial days was largely a home industry; farmers and families hammered out nails as a profitable way to spend long winter evenings.

Iron and copper, which build up the hemoglobin content of the *blood* and prevent or remedy nutritional anemia, are easily obtained from eating most fish.

Common *milkweed* plants, long regarded as a farm weed pest, are now furnishing floss for lifebelts, marine mattresses, and for heat and sound insulation.

The President of Brazil recently presented the United States armed forces with 400,000 bags of *coffee* valued at \$5,000,000 as a gift from the people of Brazil, a token of good-will.

*Coal* supplies 55% of all United States mechanical energy, powers 95% of railroad locomotives, generates 55% of the electricity, heats four out of every seven homes, and is essential in the making of all steel.

The *artificial drying* of grass by electricity, instead of by usual hay curing methods, is said to be a growing practice; the grass is cut earlier than when cut for hay because then the proteins and other nutritive values are higher.

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of themselves, how to make a living, how to write letters by using touch type-writing, how to sign their names to checks and letters.

Fortunately a number of the soldiers coming to the vision center for training want to work on a farm when they leave the Army. It is easy, officials have found, to train sightless men to take care of a farm. And chicken raising is the easiest job to teach a blind man to do. They are not taught the traditional jobs for the blind such as chair caning. They learn to make their way in the regular workaday world.

Any deaf or blind soldier may go to one of these special centers. Those becoming deaf or blind in the United States may be sent by any of the general hospitals to one of the centers.

Any soldier who is deafened or blinded may request physicians at his hos-

pital to send him to the special center. He doesn't have to wait for his other wounds to heal; those can receive expert care at the center, too. If he needs a hearing aid, the physicians at the hospital are required to comply with such a request. Or the soldier may write to the Surgeon General's office in Washington, D. C., and officials there will help him to get to the center for treatment and training.

So far, officials do not know how great the proportion of hearing and vision injuries will be. It is undoubtedly true that block buster bombs, dive bombers and all the other noise makers of this war are increasing the number of hearing injuries. Blindness cases are also increasing. But how this number compares with all the other types of injury encountered in combat is not yet known. The ratio does not seem to be at all alarming, but it is large enough to warrant this special care.

*Science News Letter, February 12, 1944*

### MEDICINE

## Penicillin Saves Life

Little girl dying from gas gangrene, which persisted even after broken arm was amputated, has remarkable recovery after mold-chemical treatment.

► THE MIRACULOUS recovery, thanks to penicillin, of a seven-year-old girl who was dying of gas gangrene is reported by Dr. W. B. McKnight, Dr. Richard D. Loewenberg and Dr. Virginia L. Wright, of Portola, Calif. (*Journal, American Medical Association, Feb. 5*)

Far from the battle fronts, where gas gangrene is an expected if dreaded complication of wounds, on the porch of her home in the High Sierra region of California, this little American girl was found lying with a broken left forearm. How the accident occurred is not known. She was taken immediately to a hospital where, in spite of treatment with sulfathiazole and injections of tetanus antitoxin, gas gangrene developed and her arm had to be amputated. Even then the gangrene continued to threaten her life.

"As a last resort penicillin was given after all hope had been abandoned for a recovery, which came like a miracle," her physicians report.

The penicillin in sufficient quantities to treat the patient successfully was obtained from Dr. Chester Keefer, in charge

of penicillin investigations for the National Research Council and the Office of Scientific Research and Development, who recommended that it be provided from a supply assigned to be used in clinical investigation.

At the time the little girl was treated, no trials of penicillin in human cases of gas gangrene had been reported, though laboratory tests had shown it extremely potent against this infection. Recent reports via England of experiences on the North African and Sicilian fronts indicated that it was successfully used on wounded men with gas gangrene.

The condition is comparatively rare in civilian life. Only one other case, a fatal railroad injury, has occurred in the High Sierra region in the last 10 years.

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### INVENTION

## Infra-Red Rays Bake Bread Better and Faster

► BETTER loaves in less time is the claim advanced on behalf of a novel bread-baking machine that uses infra-