

PSYCHOLOGY

Murderers by Hypnotism

People can be hypnotized against their wills, believes psychologist. Even murder is possible from a peaceful citizen in a trance.

► **SOME PEOPLE** when hypnotized might be made to commit murder. This is the daring suggestion of a psychologist who believes some sufficiently suggestible people can be hypnotized against their will.

An Army private in a trance tried to strangle a lieutenant colonel in one of the experiments conducted by Dr. John G. Watkins of Welch Convalescent Hospital at Daytona Beach, Fla.

Reporting his findings in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (April), Dr. Watkins explained that the private was a "conscientious young man" with a good military record.

"In a minute you will slowly open your eyes," the private was told after he was hypnotized.

"In front of you, you will see a dirty Jap soldier. He has a bayonet, and is going to kill you unless you kill him first. You will have to strangle him with your bare hands."

The "dirty Jap soldier" in front of the subject was a lieutenant colonel, head psychiatrist and director of the neuro-psychiatric division of the hospital.

After the private opened his eyes, he began to creep forward.

"Suddenly in a flying tackle he dove at the lieutenant colonel, knocking him against the wall, and with both of his hands began strangling the man," reported Dr. Watkins.

Guards pulled the private away, and the officer declared that the hypnotized subject's grip had been "strong and dangerous."

Pointing out that the private did not violate his own conscience, because he thought he was attacking an enemy, Dr. Watkins said the private "was acting under an induced hallucination."

If guards had not intervened and if a court martial had been convinced that people cannot be made to commit crimes under a hypnotic trance, the soldier might have been convicted of murder, declared the psychologist.

An Army lieutenant, given the same test in a trance, pulled a knife he was not known to have and almost stabbed an officer friend. The friend, who played the role of the Jap soldier in the experi-

ment, was saved by witnesses who held back the hypnotized officer.

In other trance tests, Dr. Watkins forced hypnotized soldiers to divulge military information.

A corporal, described as "highly hypnotizable," was offered a \$10 bill if he could keep from entering a trance. He fell in a deep trance staring at the bill.

"The controls," Dr. Watkins explained, "were certainly not as rigid as one would desire to establish firmly that criminal compulsions are possible, yet the combined weight of the evidence from these studies definitely favors that contention."

He added that the subjects chosen for the experiments were highly hypnotizable, but warned:

"There apparently would be many thousands of individuals like them in the total population."

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TEXTILES

Color of Chicken Feathers Determines Shade of Wigs

► **BEAUTIFUL** blonde, brunette and red-head wigs for show-window manikins have been made experimentally from chicken feathers without dyeing the fibers. The natural color of the feathers determines the exact shade of the finished wig.

Not the fluffy feather tips, but keratin in the quills, is used in making the silky fiber. The feathery barbs are first stripped off, then the quills are treated with an alkaline salt of an alkybenzene sulfonate. The solution is then passed through a fine-holed nozzle into a coagulating bath, where the individual fibers harden.

The process for making the fiber from chicken feather protein was developed at the U. S. Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry's Western Regional Laboratory at Albany, Calif. This fundamental research is being conducted in an attempt to find a profitable use for some of the keratin material found in approximately 175,000,000 pounds of chicken feathers that are usually wasted each year.

Chief obstacle in the way of using



"LITTLE RHODA"—The silky fibers composing the wig of this model, named by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, were made from the feathers of a Rhode Island Red chicken and have the natural color of the feathers.

these fibers for textiles is that they absorb water and are much weaker when wet. But continued improvement in the wet strength of fibers from feather keratin is predicted through use of fundamental studies of the molecular structure, and chemical and physical properties of keratin. When a fiber having sufficient wet strength is developed, it is expected to have many uses.

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FOOD CHEMISTRY

Vinegar-Pickling Method Of Preserving Is Refined

► **A REFINEMENT** of the time-honored method of preserving meat by pickling it in vinegar is the basis of patent 2,417,806, issued to Hans F. Bauer and Elmer F. Glabe of Chicago, assignors to Stein, Hall and Company, Inc. They use an acetic acid salt.

Another refinement of the vinegar-pickling method is the subject of patent 2,417,889, granted to M. J. Stammelman of New York. He makes a food container with porous walls, which he impregnates with vinegar. The acetic acid vapor, slowly given off, prevents the development of spoilage molds and bacteria.

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