

## MEDICINE

**Hayfever Drug Aids Victims Of Parkinson's Disease**

► RELIEF for victims of shaking palsy or Parkinson's disease from the hayfever drug, thephorin, was reported by Dr. F. M. Berger of the University of Rochester in the *NEW YORK STATE JOURNAL OF MEDICINE*.

Of 24 patients treated, 13 showed improvement within one to two days, he said. Patients who had previously been unable to turn over in bed due to muscular weakness found that they could do so a couple of days after receiving the drug. It also enabled patients to feed and clothe themselves.

One patient confined to his chair for two years was able to return to work after treatment with the drug.

Dr. Berger believes thephorin is the most effective drug found to date for this disease because it appears to be effective for all types of Parkinson's disease.

The drug was developed by Hoffman-LaRoche and the work was made possible by grants from the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association.

*Science News Letter, August 20, 1949*

## MEDICINE

**New Sedative Is Taken off Market**

► WITHDRAWAL of a new sedative, Presidon, from the market followed reports of its possible ill effects, the Food and Drug Administration announced in Washington. The action was taken voluntarily by the manufacturer, Hoffman-LaRoche of Nutley, N. J.

George P. Larrick, associate Food and Drug Commissioner, said several reports indicating that the drug may be lowering the white blood count prompted the company to contact all doctors, hospitals, wholesalers, and retail druggists in the U. S. to stop using the drug.

The drug has been widely used in Europe for the last seven or eight years and is believed to have originated in Switzerland.

*Science News Letter, August 20, 1949*

## WILDLIFE

**Ewes Use Nursery School For Lambs, Not Mary's**

► A MOUNTAIN-TOP nursery for little lambs—but not little Mary's—is being operated in a very human sort of way by the Mama Sheep (ewes to you) of Yellowstone's Mount Washburn.

This nursery for Rocky Mountain big-horn lambs, at an elevation of 10,317 feet, is organized in the same way as many neighborhood nurseries; the mothers take

turns "shepherding" the youngsters. This gives the ewes some time to themselves, just as it frees human mothers from the care of their youngsters for the morning or afternoon.

Discipline in the nursery is maintained by rebuking snorts or even a butt from the head of the ewe on duty for a particularly unruly lamb.

Pa Sheep, like human fathers, doesn't take much interest in this daytime baby-sitting. He's off on the peaks with the other rams. As a matter of fact, he doesn't take any interest in the ewes until fall, when he seeks their company.

*Science News Letter, August 20, 1949*

## MEDICINE

**Medical Science Scholar Awards To Be Granted**

► FIVE-YEAR medical science scholar awards for young scientists interested in teaching or research in medicine will be granted to a third group of scholars by the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation in New York.

Each scholar will be a full-time faculty member at a medical school, and the school will receive a grant of \$25,000, payable at the rate of \$5,000 annually, for the scholar. A total of 29 scholars were named in 1948 and 1949, but the number to be appointed for next year has not been announced. Applications are to be made on or before Dec. 1 to the foundation.

*Science News Letter, August 20, 1949*

## ARCHAEOLOGY

**Ancient Burial Mounds In Japan To Be Excavated**

► BREAKDOWN of the formal emperor-worship system in Japan releases for scientific investigation some of the biggest earthen burial mounds in the world. Until now, digging has been forbidden because they are regarded (possibly correctly) as the tombs of ancestors of the present reigning house in Japan, writes Edwin O. Reischauer to the American research journal, *ARCHAEOLOGY* (Summer).

Excavation of the great mound believed to be the burial-place of the Emperor Nintoku, who probably reigned about 400 A. D., is the first project planned. Approval of the present emperor is indicated by the report that his younger brother, Prince Takamatsu, is to be titular head of the undertaking.

No one knows as yet, of course, what will be revealed by the diggers' spades. However, since archaeological evidence is strong that the present Japanese culture was initiated early in the Christian era by an invasion of horse-riding warriors from Korea, discovery of Korean, or Korean-like, relics in the mounds would not be surprising.

*Science News Letter, August 20, 1949*

**IN SCIENCE**

## MEDICINE

**Polio Isolation Period Of Only One Week Urged**

► POLIO victims would be isolated for only one week after contracting the disease, or for the duration of their fever if it lasts longer, under recommendations made by the National Conference on Recommended Practices for the Control of Poliomyelitis announced in New York.

Twenty medical authorities who met last June in Ann Arbor, Mich., under the sponsorship of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, developed the recommendations and called the present quarantine regulations unwarranted.

They stated that quarantine for polio is not of proven value.

The medical scientists pointed out in a guide prepared for local health officers that these regulations may create fear or hysteria during an epidemic and are wasteful as far as hospital facilities, personnel and family finances are concerned. They also cautioned that a long period of isolation creates barriers to giving the patient the treatment he needs in the early stages of the disease.

Schools were urged to open on schedule except in two situations: if children were transported to school from widely separated areas; and if, in addition to not reopening the schools, children were kept from coming in contact at such places as theaters, picnic and play grounds, beaches and Sunday schools.

*Science News Letter, August 20, 1949*

## ASTRONOMY

**Rocket Speeds Dwarfed By Newly-Discovered Nova**

► EXPLODING at the velocity of 550,000 miles per hour, the "new" star, or nova, recently discovered in France, is still relatively bright and is being observed by most of the leading American observatories (*See SNL, Aug. 13, p. 104*).

The University of Michigan reports the 250-kilometers-per-second speed of the star's expanding shell, which makes earthly rocket speeds small in comparison. McDonald Observatory in Texas also reports to the Harvard Clearing center for astronomical messages in the U. S., a similar great shift in the absorption lines of the spectrum indicating the high velocity.

The new star is staying bright unusually long, as it is still reported as eighth magnitude. It is in the constellation of Scutum, the shield.

*Science News Letter, August 20, 1949*

# E FIELDS

## MEDICINE

### One Cold Wave Process Is Absolved of Ill-Effects

► A COLD wave home permanent has been absolved of causing ill effects to users by a team of physicians reporting in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Aug. 13).

The home wave used in the new tests has the same ingredients as other cold wave processes but no generalization can be made since these other lotions may have different concentrations of the necessary chemicals.

The new evidence concerning its safety is based on patch tests made on 1,200 volunteers. They were a representative group of many varying conditions. Some had skin infections from other causes, some worked with the solutions in the factory, and some had had one to 20 previous cold waves.

In addition, to make the test absolutely fair, the beauty clinic operators were asked to let the scalps of the volunteers be thoroughly wetted by the waving lotion.

The results revealed that the cold wave preparation caused few skin irritations and very little sensitization. Previous criticism had also been based on its destructive action on liver cells. In this study no such harmful effect was found.

The work was done by Drs. Howard T. Behrman and Frank C. Combes of the New York University College of Medicine, Dr. Michael G. Mulinos of New York Medical College, Dr. Gustav Weissberg, Dr. Jerome Kaufman, Dr. Herbert Fishbein, and Willard F. Greenwald of New York, and Dr. Milton M. Hurwitz of St. Paul. The tests were conducted at Bellevue Hospital.

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## INVENTION

### Newly Patented Gadget Butters Corn-on-Cob

► A GOLF putter and a knife used for buttering corn-on-the-cob are alike in one respect; both are utterly unsuited for the purpose. Realization of this, as regards the knife at least, moved a Corn-Belt inventor, M. N. Mossel of Fulton, Mo., to do something about it. He came up with a special gadget that will apply the butter where it is wanted, without dropping it in pieces all over the plate, and on this he has just been granted U. S. patent 2,478,122.

The device is really quite simple. It is a square piece of metal or any other suitable material, arched underneath so that

it will ride on the corn ear, saddle-fashion. In the middle is a recess of the right size to take a pat of butter.

Turned upside down, it rests on four little legs until the butter is inserted. Then it is inverted over the corn, and the legs become a grip for the fingers of the user, as he slides it along over the ear, turning the latter until every grain is lusciously buttered.

It really ought to save a lot of time now wasted in attempts to butter corn with a knife—time that can henceforth be devoted to the serious business of eating corn.

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## AGRICULTURE

### Hybrid Seed Corn Grown Without Detasseling

► HYBRID seed corn can now be grown without the laborious, and often injurious, detasseling process. This has been made possible by the development of an inbred strain that produces no pollen. Detasseling, ordinarily practiced to prevent the corn plants intended to be the female parents of hybrid seed from pollinizing themselves, thereby becomes unnecessary.

The new pollenless strain was developed at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven, by Drs. Donald F. Jones and P. C. Mangelsdorf. Dr. Jones was the originator of the double-cross system now generally used in producing hybrid seed corn. Dr. Mangelsdorf is now a member of the Harvard University faculty.

The new production method is described in a new bulletin of the experiment station, written by Dr. Jones and Dr. Herbert L. Everett.

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## COMMUNICATIONS

### Airlines Require Large Network of Telegraph Wire

► AIRLINES as well as railroads require vast mileage of telephone wire for flight operations and other purposes, and what is claimed to be the largest communications network of any company in the world is now completed and in operation by United Air Lines, which centers operational activities in Denver.

Extending from this operational base, the company has almost 12,000 miles of private telephone lines and 20,000 miles of leased teletype wire, plus a vast array of plane-to-ground radio facilities.

Control of all cargo and passenger space is now centralized in Denver. Some 6,000 miles of telephone wire for payload control link 25 cities directly with the central office. Flight operations utilize about 4,000 miles of private wire, which also terminate there. A 1,900-mile administrative line connects executive offices in Chicago with the Denver center, and with the company's maintenance base in San Francisco.

Science News Letter, August 20, 1949

## BIOCHEMISTRY

### Cud-Chewing Animals Form Amino Acids from Urea

► AMINO acids, the chemical building blocks out of which proteins are formed, can be produced in the rumen, or first division of the compound stomach, of cud-chewing animals from the supposedly non-nutrient compound, urea. This has been demonstrated in experiments on sheep and goats at Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., by a five-man research team led by Prof. J. K. Loosli.

The animals were fed on a synthetic diet containing no proteins and only incidental traces of amino acids, with urea as the only nitrogenous compound present. Analyses of material taken from their rumens, as well as of their body wastes, showed the presence of ten different amino acids, in considerable quantities. The animals also gained weight steadily, indicating the synthesis of the amino acids into proteins, and these into living body materials.

Associated with Prof. Loosli in the work were Profs. H. H. Williams and L. A. Maynard and Drs. W. E. Thomas and Fent H. Ferris. Their report appears in the journal SCIENCE (Aug. 5).

Science News Letter, August 20, 1949

## BIOCHEMISTRY

### Growth-Control Substances Present in Seaweed

► SEAWEEDS produce growth-control substance, and respond to it in very much the same manner as the higher land plants. This has been demonstrated in two ways by Dr. Louis G. Williams of Furman University of Greenville, S. C., who carried on his experiments at the Woods Hole, Mass., Marine Biological Laboratory.

In one series of experiments, Dr. Williams cuts disks out of the broad-bladed seaweed known as Laminaria, and kept them in beakers of sea water containing various dilutions of the synthetic growth-control substance, indole acetic acid. They responded to the lower concentrations by growing healthily, but became unhealthy and disintegrated when there was too much of the compound. This agrees very well with what is known about growth-hormone effects on higher plants, which are stimulated by low dosages and injured or killed by overdoses, as in 2,4-D treatment of weeds.

In a second experimental series, Dr. Williams squeezed the juice out of Laminaria tissue, made it into a paste with lanolin, and applied the paste to the sides of oat seedlings. These responded by bending over, indicating increased growth rates where the Laminaria juice was at work on their cells.

Details of the experiments are reported in the journal, SCIENCE (Aug. 12).

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