

Trail of the Bee

➤ **HONEY** is a mouth-watering word all over the world. Save for Eskimos and Tunguses and a few other remote tribes in forsaken regions so luckless as to be without bees, all human beings know it—and think of only one word in connection with it: "More, please!" And plenty of our sub-human animal kindred, from bears to flies, are no less fond of it than we ourselves.

Honey is commonly classified according

to the flowers from which the bees have taken the nectar, its raw material. White clover honey has become staple and standard over practically the whole of the United States, and for most of Europe as well. Along with it, and closely resembling it, are the honeys derived from sweet clover and alfalfa.

But honey gourmets from various sections set up local favorite varieties as superior to the clover product. Usually such preferences are based on a fragrance or flavor of regionally dominant nectar plants, from which the honey derives a distinctive aroma or bouquet, no less characteristic than the bouquets of wines that enable connoisseurs to exalt the Moselle valley, or the hills of Burgundy, or the islands of the Aegean, according to their several preferences.

No one who has ever tasted the orange-blossom honey of Florida is likely to forget it. Yet from the opposite corner of the country may come a claim that it is not to be compared with the apple-blossom honey of the Pacific Northwest. Californi-

ans have their orange-blossom sweet, too, but must divide their allegiance between this and the rich honey from the white sage and ceanothus of their foothills.

In the Ohio Valley and the Southeast as well as over a considerable part of the Middle Atlantic region, three forest trees yield a considerable part of the honey crop: linden or basswood, tulip poplar, and black locust. These honeys all have their devoted followers among the sweet-toothed population.

But those who have, with dripping tongues, followed the Trail of the Bee, over the whole American map, sipping from her many combs as she sips from many flowers, would probably cast a majority vote in favor of a honey known in the Southern Appalachians and apparently not elsewhere: sourwood honey. He who has known the nectar of that unpromisingly named tree knows he has tasted perfection. For his tongue there are no more worlds to conquer.

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Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

MEDICINE

Cancer in Mentally Ill

➤ **MENTAL** patients are less likely to have cancer than are other persons.

Figures on the cause of death in Chicago State Hospital show that in 1935-37 cancer was the cause of only 2.5% of all deaths in this institution. Ten years later, 1945-47 the rate had gone up, but only to 4.5%. For the general population, cancer deaths account for from 10% to 12% of the total.

In spite of the fact that the rate of admissions to the hospital had increased in 1945-47 over the rate for the 10 years before, the number of deaths had not increased and the death rate was actually lower, Dr. Herman Josephy, of Chicago, said in reporting the figures to the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY (Sept.).

There were more deaths of old age patients in the more recent period, but this was because of the increased influx of senile patients.

Many of these old people die just about as soon as they reach the hospital, Dr. Josephy found. About 20% of those in their 70's are dead within one month of admission. About 25% of the octogenarians have the same fate.

In fact, out of every 100 seniles admitted in January and February of a year, only 60 are still alive when June rolls around.

"It seems justified to ask," comments Dr. Josephy, "whether these patients (who, of course, are senile psychotics) could not have died at home as well as in the hospital. It is very likely that they did not benefit from the transport from home to the Psychopathic Hospital and from there to the State Hospital."

On the other hand, there are quite a

number of senile patients who survive for several years in the hospital. A few patients admitted as octogenarians survived for more than six years and died in the second half of their nineties.

Deaths from exhaustion in the course of acute schizophrenia have markedly decreased, Dr. Josephy reported. The same is true, he said, for deaths from general paresis. Delirium tremens has disappeared as a cause of death, at least from Chicago State Hospital.

Science News Letter, September 24, 1949

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by Roland H. Berg

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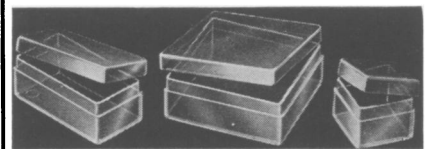
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