



Deneb likewise is Arabic and means "the tail," since it is in the tail of the swan. However, its full name, to the Arabs, was "Al Dhanab al Dajajah," or "the hen's tail," for they made it a different bird.

Regulus sounds Latin, and indeed it is, meaning "a little king." This has been applied to it because it was supposed, according to the superstitious beliefs of the old astrologers, that it ruled the affairs of the heavens.

The Romans themselves called it "Cor Leonis," or the heart of the lion, and this was adopted by the Arabs, translated as "Al Kalb al Asad," but this has not survived as Aldebaran did.

Pollux also is Latin, the name of one of the twins who were favorite Roman gods, especially among the sailors.

Celestial Time Table for January

Jan.	EST	
1	3:29 p.m.	Moon is in first quarter.
2	2:30 a.m.	Algol (variable star in Perseus) at minimum brightness.

4	7:00 a.m.	Earth nearest sun; distance 91,342,000 miles.
6	4:00 a.m.	Moon nearest earth; 225,600 miles.
7	8:08 p.m.	Algol at minimum.
8	7:44 a.m.	Full moon.
	10:21 p.m.	Moon passes Jupiter.
10	4:57 p.m.	Algol at minimum.
15	3:00 p.m.	Jupiter in opposite direction from sun and nearest earth; distance 395,400,000 miles.
	5:13 p.m.	Moon in last quarter.
17	10:00 p.m.	Moon farthest distance 251,600 miles.
	10:25 p.m.	Moon passes Saturn.
19	6:38 p.m.	Moon passes Venus.
23	8:06 p.m.	New moon.
25	1:01 a.m.	Algol at minimum.
	10:00 a.m.	Venus farthest west of sun.
27	9:50 p.m.	Algol at minimum.
28	3:00 a.m.	Mercury farthest east of sun.
	11:37 p.m.	Moon passes Mars.
30	6:39 p.m.	Algol at minimum.
31	12:05 a.m.	Moon in first quarter.

Subtract one hour for CST, two hours for MST, and three for PST.

Science News Letter, December 25, 1954

DERMATOLOGY

Winter Weather Effects

➤ WINTER WEATHER damage to the skin starts most cases of "housewives' hands," Dr. Matthew J. Brunner of Northwestern University, Chicago, charged at the meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology and Syphilology in Chicago.

Soap, detergents, dust, solvents and other materials the housewife handles every day play their part. But when Dr. Brunner tried to pin the trouble down on a single irritant by having women soak their hands in a detergent solution, he found it could only be done in the winter. In the summer, women's hands remained free of eczema even when soaked in the detergent.

Very small cracks, called fissures, in the skin in winter apparently are what pave the way for the irritating substances to cause the skin trouble.

"When the path of the detergent through the skin was followed," Dr. Brunner explained, "it was seen that it did not seep or permeate through the laminated stratum

corneum (the horny top layer of skin), but that it quickly gained entrance through the minute fissures seen on the hands in winter-time dried out, cracked, chapped skin.

"Thus, one may say that the physical barrier offered by a continuous coherent stratum corneum is of paramount importance, rather than its alkali-neutralizing power."

This outer layer of skin, together with sebum, a fatty excretion on the skin, appears to have acidic groups that neutralize alkali. If the outer layer of keratin becomes thinner than usual or the sebum is reduced in quantity, the alkali-neutralizing power will be limited and the skin will have poor resistance.

However, Dr. Brunner points out that this, of itself, cannot be a universal cause of eczema because it does not account for damage inflicted by acids, fat solvents, turpentine and neutral agents.

Science News Letter, December 25, 1954

MEDICINE

Enzyme Might Help in Polio If Vaccine Fails

➤ IF VACCINATION by the Salk vaccine or some other fails to stop polio, there is a new chemical treatment that might provide speedier and more complete recovery to victims of the disease.

Good results with this treatment, in trials in a small number of cases, were reported by Dr. George J. Boines, chief of communicable diseases and poliomyelitis at Wilmington General and St. Francis Hospitals, Wilmington, Del., at the meeting of the Delaware Academy of General Practice.

The treatment Dr. Boines used toward the end of last summer's polio season consisted of injections into the muscles of a solution of purified trypsin in sesame oil. Trypsin is a digestive enzyme secreted by the pancreas. It has anti-inflammation properties but has been considered unsafe for internal use until recently.

Trypsin can be given safely, recent reports show, if used in very small quantities and injected into muscles instead of into the blood stream directly.

Its effect in polio presumably would come through its ability to reduce edema, or watery swelling. This edema, if occurring in the central nervous system, could play a big part in causing the paralysis of polio, Dr. Boines pointed out. If enzyme treatment could reverse this swelling fast enough, it might prevent paralysis.

In Dr. Boines' patients, progression of paralysis was apparently arrested after 48 hours of the enzyme treatment. "Most significant," he said, "was the return of muscle strength in these patients."

The number of patients treated was too small, he pointed out, to be sure of its value, but he thinks it worth further trial.

The trypsin preparation he used is marketed under the trade name Parenzyme.

Science News Letter, December 25, 1954

MEDICINE

Antibiotic From Germs in Wax Moths

➤ DISCOVERY OF a new antibiotic, or anti-germ chemical like penicillin, is announced by Drs. T. Valyi-Nagy, J. Uri and I. Szilagyi of the University of Debrecen, Hungary, in *Nature* (Dec. 11).

The antibiotic has been named primycin. It is made by microorganisms found in the larvae of the wax moth, *Galleria melonella*.

Primycin seems to be active against viruses as well as against such larger organisms as the staphylococci that cause boils.

Good results in treating superficial infections in man are reported by the Hungarian scientists. However, the new antibiotic may have limited usefulness since trials in animals showed it to be toxic. Consequently it has only been used for superficial infections in humans and may never get beyond that kind of use.

Science News Letter, December 25, 1954

