

PSYCHOLOGY

Do Not Bully Mentally Ill

➤ NEVER THREATEN a mentally ill person.

Never strike him.

Never call him names.

Never try to bully him.

This advice is contained in the manual for police officers, "How To Recognize and Handle Abnormal People," prepared for the National Association for Mental Health by Drs. Robert A. Matthews and Loyd W. Rowland. (See SNL, July 16, p. 44.)

The police officer or other person who must deal with a violent person should remember, the doctors cautioned, that the patient may already be badly frightened. He may think he is threatened by voices he is "hearing" and he may think that you are just another person who is against him, who wants to punish or kill him. If you are rough, he will be more scared.

He may be reassured if you speak to him in courteous and kindly fashion, take off your hat and invite everybody to be seated.

Do not let jibes of a mental patient get under your skin, the doctors advised.

"Some mental patients are unusually clever in picking out weaknesses and points of irritability in those who are around them. They may show great skill in the

way they annoy those who have charge of them. They may call attention to the officer's unattractive baldness, his protruding teeth, his pot-belly or his squeaky voice."

If the person you must deal with has threatened or attempted suicide, be sure that a physician is called. He should be the one to decide whether or not the patient should be sent to a hospital.

"All suicide attempts must be taken seriously," the doctors warned. The life you save by helping the would-be suicide may be an important one.

"It is sometimes true that people who become depressed are extremely fine individuals who contribute much to the social, financial, and intellectual life of the community," they explained.

Sometimes physical illness may make a person appear drunk or insane, they pointed out. Such conditions include diabetic coma, the insulin shock when a diabetic has had too much insulin, the delirium of flu or pneumonia, and various brain conditions.

The police officer's reputation and that of the department may be made or broken by the skill or carelessness with which he handles such a sick person.

Science News Letter, July 23, 1955

MEDICINE

Negroes Resist Malaria

➤ NEGROES ARE highly resistant to the common malaria of the United States in comparison to whites, a team of U. S. Public Health Service scientists has found.

In the course of treatment for syphilis, 104 Negro and 529 white patients were inoculated with *Plasmodium vivax*, the parasite that causes benign tertian malaria.

While infections resulted in 96.2% of the white patients, only 23.1% of the Negroes showed the parasite in their blood, Martin D. Young, Don E. Eyles, Robert W. Burgess and Geoffrey M. Jeffery of the National Microbiological Institute, Columbia, S. C., reported in the *Journal of Parasitology* (June).

During the war years, strains of *Plasmodium vivax* from Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, Korea and the Southwest Pacific were tested, and these foreign strains were unable to infect Negroes with malaria consistently. Thus, the Negro seems to have a general resistance to strains of vivax from all areas, rather than to specific strains, the scientists concluded.

Negroes from non-malarious areas of the United States also show resistance to *P. vivax* infection, they said, indicating that the immunity is natural rather than acquired.

During the test, one Negro received an inoculation containing 1,177,000,000 para-

sites. This patient showed no parasites in his blood the following day or thereafter.

In contrast, white patients receiving only one-tenth this number of vivax parasites often show them in the blood immediately, and they may be present continuously throughout the primary attack.

Science News Letter, July 23, 1955

PSYCHOLOGY

Long Feeding Session Leads to Thumb Sucking

➤ IF BABY sucks his thumb, it may be because he sucked too long on his bottle.

New research casts doubt on the opposite psychoanalytic theory that lack of bottle or breast sucking causes the infant to suck thumb or fingers.

This theory was put to a test by Dr. Theodore H. Blau and Mrs. Lili R. Blau, psychologists of Tampa, Fla. They fed a baby a few weeks old with the standard two-hole nipple on his bottle and, alternately, with a nipple in which six extra holes were punched.

With the eight-hole nipple, the baby finished his bottle in about 13 minutes less time than he spent sucking on the two-hole nipple.

Nevertheless, he took longer to get to

sleep after the longer session on the bottle with only two holes in the nipple. More crying and more general restlessness was associated with the longer feeding. Most important, the long-feeding session was accompanied by more "non-nutritive" sucking, such as thumb and finger sucking.

The current psychoanalytic theory thus was reversed by this research, reported by the two psychologists in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (July).

If thumb sucking is a result of the way the young infant feeds, it would seem to be due to long and hard sucking at the bottle, not to taking the bottle away too soon.

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