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Questions

MEDICINE—What are some factors that may cause spontaneous regression of tumors? p. 230.

RADIO ASTRONOMY—What is one outstanding characteristic of masers? p. 227.

TECHNOLOGY—How could fiber optics be applied to cryptography? p. 235.

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MEDICINE

Guinea Pigs Can Learn To Have Asthma Attacks

► GUINEA PIGS can learn to have asthma attacks even when the substance to which they are allergic is not present.

This was reported to the American Psychosomatic Society meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, by a group of physicians at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

When guinea pigs that had been made allergic to egg white were placed in a special chamber where they breathed an atmosphere of fine egg white mist, they became ill with clinical signs very much like those of human asthma. Not only did the asthma of the guinea pigs look like human asthma but it was similar also in X-ray and immunologic study and in response to drugs.

After the animals had had asthma attacks in the chamber for 13 days, it was found that they continued to have the attacks in the chamber even when no egg white was present.

This would appear to be an instance of "learned asthma," Drs. Perry Ottenberg, Marvin Stein and Jerry Lewis, all of the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, concluded.

The animals who learned to have asthma under such circumstances can also forget it. After daily attacks of learned asthma for almost two weeks, the attacks became less and less intense and finally did not occur.

Further research is necessary, the doctors indicated, to ascertain that the learned asthma is really true asthma and not something else, such as a neurosis or a fear response.

Science News Letter, April 12, 1958

Do You Know?

Trilobites disappeared more than 200,000,000 years ago but other arthropods survive in abundance.

One of the main symptoms of *pellagra*, a disease in which niacin deficiency is a prime cause, is mental disturbance.

For several years, Americans have been spending about a quarter of their disposable income on food.

In general, the *weather* in the U. S. moves from west to east.

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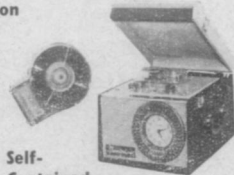
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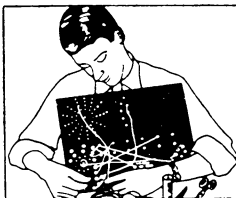
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