

explained, air or other stomach contents may be entrapped in the esophagus or the heart end of the stomach. Complete rupture of the organ, usually the lower end of the esophagus, has occurred in a considerable number of these cases. X-ray studies often make it possible to see these contractions, bulgings and other abnormal conditions in the esophagus. The location of these abnormalities has a direct bearing, Dr. Jackson said, on the distribution of the pain of which the patient complains.

Nitrites, standby medicines for patients with angina pectoris, relieve these patients by relaxing the smooth muscle of the esophagus or stomach. If the drug, which acts only locally, does not reach these muscle fibers in sufficient concentration, relief may not occur.

Angina pectoris has been one of the unsolved mysteries of medicine for nearly 170 years, Dr. Jackson pointed out. Some 80 different theories have been proposed to explain this painful and often fatal affliction. In presenting his and his associates' theory of the cause of angina, Dr. Jackson relegates the currently accepted theory to the field of demonology because "nothing but a demon can fulfill all the requirements" of this theory as to the cause of the condition.

Prostate Disease Remedy

One of the male sex hormones, testosterone, may be a valuable remedy for prostate gland disease, Dr. Harold P. Rusch, of the University of Wisconsin Medical School, suggested.

The hormone, Dr. Rusch's research showed, may undo some of the damage done in the disease. Recent research has shown that certain changes of the gland tissue are the result of a relative decrease of male hormone in relation to the amount of female hormone present in the male body.

Changing these proportions of male to female hormone by giving female hormone to mice caused changes in their prostate glands similar to those seen in man. In the experiments reported today Dr. Rusch was able to reverse some of the changes by giving male sex hormone to the animals.

Boil Germ Affects Heart

A new menace from a familiar germ, *Staphylococcus aureus*, which causes boils, appears in studies reported by Drs. H. E. Hoff, J. Dingle and L. H. Nahum of Yale University School of Medicine. (Turn to Page 286)



Eagle or Dove?

HOW opposite are the scientific and common names of the columbine!

Many plants have practically the same names in the scientist's Latin and the layman's English. Violet is *Viola* to the botanist; the common name is directly derived from the Latin one. The same is true of Rose and *Rosa*, Lily and *Lilium*, Cherry and *Cerasus*.

Sometimes the common and scientific names are fairly close translations of each other, as Sunflower and *Helianthus*, Bloodroot and *Sanguinaria*, Cranesbill and *Geranium*. Or at least there will be an agreement of imagination, though the names have no close connection; thus Waterlily and *Nymphaea*.

But the two names of the columbine point in exactly opposite directions. For columbine, in any of the Romance languages, is immediately recognizable as a reference to a dove, whereas the botanical name, *Aquilegia*, comes from *Aquila*, the fierce eagle of the standards of Rome.

Why this paradox? It seems that the botanist and the man in the street (or rather, in the country lane) reached opposite fancies by looking at opposite ends of the flower. The layman looked at the top, and saw in its convoluted arrangement a nest of doves. The botanist looked at the five long spurs, and saw them as the claws of an eagle.

Imagination seems to have been just a trifle stretched in either case. The common name of columbine is certainly more poetic than ornithological: no dove ever built so neat a nest as is figured in the top of the columbine flower; furthermore, the standard number of nestlings for doves is two, not five.

And however good a botanist the donor of the eagle-name *Aquilegia* may have been, he certainly was no ornithologist, either. For the foot of an eagle has four clawed toes, not five; and who ever saw eagle's claws terminating in smooth round little globes full of honey-sweet nectar?

However, probably one should not be too captious. Imagination, whether of Carolus Linnaeus or of plain John Johnson, must be let have its way. Particularly when both furnish us with really beautiful-sounding names for a really beautiful flower.

The commonest American species of columbine has a second seeming paradox in its name. For its full title is *Aquilegia canadensis*, though by far the larger part of its habitat lies in the United States rather than in Canada. But that is only a relic of the days when France held all of North America between the Appalachians and the Rockies, as well as what is now Canada, and the name Canada was extended to cover practically the whole of the Mississippi basin.

Science News Letter, May 1, 1937

Like popcorn, a kind of popping rice has been produced.

New lightships on the coast of Britain are to be equipped with powerful lamps to send out beams visible at ten miles.

It would take nearly 20 tons of steel to equip a 150-acre grain and dairy farm with full equipment and implements of steel, according to one estimate.

● RADIO

May 4, 4:15 p. m., E.S.T.
NEW INDUSTRIES FOR OLD—Dr. E. R. Weidlein, Director of the Mellon Institute.

May 11, 4:15 p. m., E.S.T.
THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE—Dr. W. R. Walton of the U. S. Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine.

In the Science Service series of radio discussions led by Watson Davis, Director, over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

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