

ceptibility that the immunologists describe—that time before the antibodies of protection develop when the organism is particularly susceptible. His emotional system is then defenseless against the onslaughts of the particular situations or objects that are his particular psychic poison.

Similar sensitizing processes occur in every psychic conflict, Dr. Marshall says.

Any agent that is capable of stimulating an organism so that it responds must be thought of as being capable of producing a state of susceptibility in the organism, he concludes. It is just as logical, he argues, to think of an idea or a word or a person or any other psychological agent as capable of producing susceptibility as it is to think of a virus or a pollen as doing so.

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Science News Letter, July 24, 1937

PUBLIC HEALTH

No Diphtheria Deaths In Six American Cities

SIX large American cities have the proud record of no deaths from either diphtheria or typhoid fever during the past year.

These honor cities are Cambridge and Somerville, Mass., Syracuse and Utica, N. Y., Duluth, Minn., and Salt Lake City, Utah. Nineteen cities had no deaths from diphtheria during 1936 and 18 had none from typhoid.

The Journal of the American Medical Association announced its annual survey of diphtheria deaths in the 93 cities from which it has obtained death rates for the last 14 years.

Back in 1923, when these surveys began, the average mortality rate from diphtheria was 13.13 per 100,000 population. Today it is 1.51 per 100,000, owing to the preventive programs that have been instituted throughout the country.

In Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana, the health picture is not quite so bright as elsewhere. In diphtheria, as in typhoid fever, these states continue to have higher death rates than those of any other section of the country.

Dallas, Tex., with a death rate of 7.3 per 100,000, had the worst record of all large cities. Along with El Paso and Oklahoma City, Dallas reported more diphtheria deaths than during the previous year.

Tulsa, Houston, and New Orleans showed slight decreases in diphtheria

death rates. Fort Worth and San Antonio had a very creditable drop in mortality from the disease over the previous year.

The 19 cities that had no diphtheria deaths during 1936 are as follows: Albany, Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica,

N. Y.; Cambridge and Somerville, Mass.; New Haven, Conn.; Wilmington, Del.; Elizabeth, Newark, and Trenton, N. J.; Erie, Pa.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Duluth and St. Paul, Minn.; Kansas City, Mo.; Salt Lake City, Utah; Spokane and Tacoma, Wash.

Science News Letter, July 24, 1937

BOTANY

"Lost Battalion" of Rare Trees Rediscovered in Florida

NEARLY extinct, discovered a half-century ago, lost, now found again. Such is the checkered career of a "lost battalion" of rare trees in northern Florida, reported by Prof. Herman Kurz of the State College for Women to the Florida Academy of Sciences, to be published in the next volume of that body's *Proceedings*.

The trees belong to the genus *Torreya* or *Tumion*, which is a conifer that looks somewhat like a yew. In fact, its full name, *Torreya taxifolia*, means "yew-leaved *Torreya*." Because of its odorous leaves and wood, it has borne such English names as stinking cedar and polecat wood. It has also been nicknamed gopher wood—possibly an allusion to the reputed material of Noah's Ark! But lately the old folk names have been giving way, partly, to the scientific Latin, so that to scientists and the general public alike it may eventually have the same name.

In earlier geologic times the genus was worldwide in its distribution, but during the Ice Age it was cut down to a few relict patches—one in Florida, larger ones in California, Japan, and China.

The Florida *Torreya* trees, a distinct species, are found mainly in a small block of land just east of the Appalachian river in the north part of the state. In the books all the trees are declared to be on the east bank of the river.

However, in 1885 a noted Southern botanist, Dr. A. W. Chapman, found a few trees about half a dozen miles west of the river, and so reported in one of his publications. When so few individuals of a species exist, the discovery of even a dozen new ones is a matter of some importance. But the find was lost sight of, and from then until now apparently has never been mentioned.

A short time ago, one of Prof. Kurz's students, Mrs. Carrie Yon Williams, obtained for her teacher some specimens

of the old, forgotten "lost battalion" west of the river. Prof. Kurz has since visited the locality and studied the trees in detail.

There are about 60 of them, ranging in height from 18 inches to 30 feet, scattered over about an acre of ground. Their assorted sizes constitute evidence that the trees are reproducing, an encouraging sign for their survival. Mixed with them are larger trees, mainly magnolias and beeches—a common timber type in northern Florida.

The locality is now known as Dog Pond, near Lake Ocheeese. In Dr. Chapman's time it was more romantically designated as Cypress Lake.

Prof. Kurz, in addition to sending a technical report of the discovery to the Florida Academy of Science, has deposited a specimen of the *Torreya* in the herbarium of the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station at Gainesville.

Science News Letter, July 24, 1937

ETHNOLOGY

Eskimos Could Write, Frenchman Believes

PERHAPS in future we should speak of the learned Eskimos.

A French scientist has announced that Alaskan Eskimos could read and write. He rates them as equals in culture with the ancient Chinese and Egyptians.

This scientist, Andre Leroi-Gourhan of the Museum of Ethnography of Paris, regards the pictures Eskimos engraved or carved on their belongings as a true system of writing. That is, Eskimos used the pictures as conventional signs by which they recorded their acts and intentions, for others to read.

He suggests that Eskimos began by making pictures of their sign language. The sign for beaver was putting two fingers in the mouth indicating teeth. Eskimos learned to recognize drawings