



FIVE PLANETS SHINE

The sky of early autumn puts on an especially fine planetary show, with three planets visible at night and two just before dawn.

BACTERIOLOGY

# Studies Germ-Killing Power of Toothpastes

IN THIS germ-conscious world of ours a good many persons have the idea that they would like to keep their mouths not only clean but free of germs. The idea is probably based on knowledge that germs of many diseases enter the body through the mouth and nose and is probably strengthened by antiseptic claims made for some toothpastes and mouthwashes.

Without going into the merits of the idea, it can safely be said that the job of keeping the mouth free of germs is herculean if not altogether impossible. Much has already been written on this subject and just recently Arthur H. Bryan, bacteriologist of Baltimore City College, published results of studies he made on antiseptic toothpastes.

He used ten different methods of studying these. An average of the number of germs or bacteria in the mouth of each of his student-volunteers was established, and the students then were given various tubes of commercial toothpastes or powders and asked to use them regularly three times a day for a period of three weeks to one month. During this time frequent checks were made on the bacteria in their mouths.

The antiseptic property of the toothpastes was compared with that of phenol (carbolic acid) and found to be somewhat lower. From this it appears that these antiseptic toothpastes are not

strong enough to harm gums, tooth enamel, or tongue and cheeks.

Recently extracted teeth were soaked in solutions of the toothpastes, and others were mounted in blocks and brushed with an electric dental machine continuously for one hour with the various toothpastes.

The significant conclusion of these and the other tests was that the use of the dental creams decreased the number of bacteria in the mouth for one hour after use, but at the end of this hour the number of bacteria increased and at the end of two hours was as high or higher than before.

*Science News Letter, August 27, 1938*

PSYCHOLOGY

## Now a Clinic to Teach Pedestrians How to Live

A CLINIC where men and women are treated not for tuberculosis or heart trouble, but for automobile accidents, or "pedestrianitis" as a physician might term it, that is the strange outgrowth of traffic conditions in our twentieth century cities.

Automobiles, as everyone knows, are a bad enough hazard for drivers. But the driver is at least somewhat familiar with the workings of his and other cars.

Pedestrians, in a great many cases, know nothing whatever about cars. They may have been brought up in a day when speeding vehicles were confined to railroad tracks. They are completely unaware of the difficulties of quickly stopping a rapidly moving car. They have never tried to see through a clouded windshield or skidded on a glassy pavement. They may not even realize that in the blinding glare of headlights, they may walk unknowingly into the path of an oncoming car.

A clinic for testing and instructing pe-

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by Dr. E. F. Northrup

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