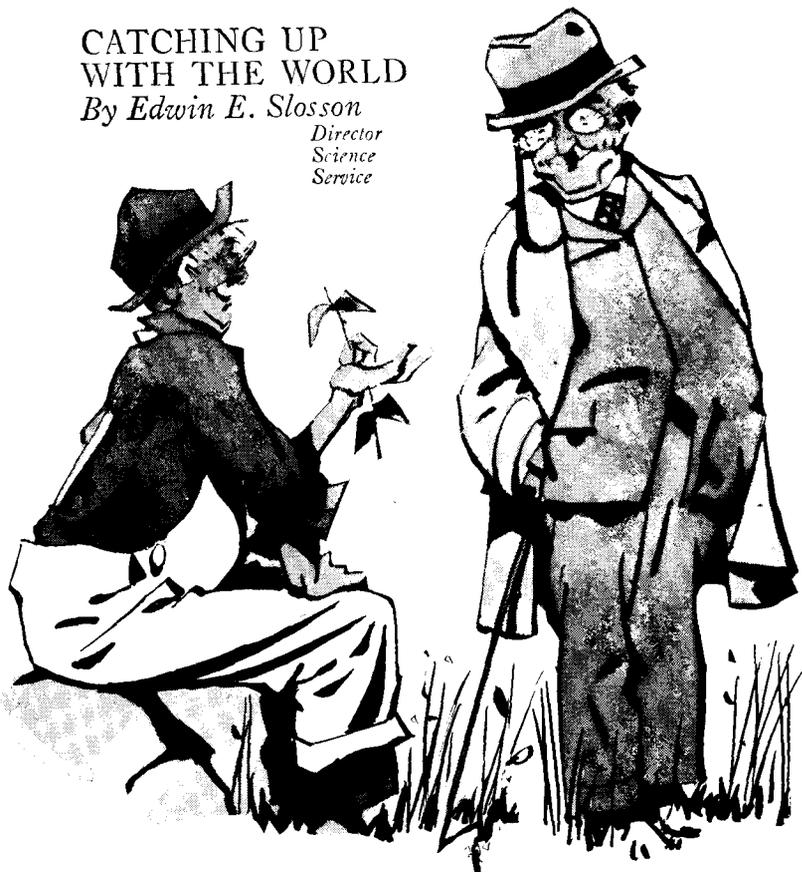


CATCHING UP WITH THE WORLD

By Edwin E. Slosson  
Director  
Science  
Service



It's the Leaf—not the Pie

ANOTHER of the old wives' tales about the virtue of herb teas turns out to have a real foundation. For generations the country folk of the Pennsylvania hills and Austrian Alps have held that a decoction of the leaves of the huckleberry or blueberry common in these regions was "good medicine" for the disease known to physicians as diabetes, though hitherto American and European chemists have been unable to find anything of medicinal value in it. But at last a substance of remarkable potency in reducing excess of sugar in the blood has been extracted by Dr. R. I. Wagner, who first tackled the problem in Vienna, and came to the Physiatric Institution of Morristown, N. J., in order to pursue his researches in cooperation with Dr. Frederick M. Allen.

It has been named "myrtillin" because it was first found in the leaves of *Vaccinium myrtillus*, commonly known as bilberry or whortleberry, but is contained in all green leaves as well as in yeast.

The most convenient source found so far is the huckleberry although it contains an extremely minute amount of the active principle, probably less than one part in a hundred million of the dry leaves. The best preparation so far extracted still contains a large amount of inert and useless material yet is so powerful that a tenth of a milligram, say a pinhead of powder, is sufficient to produce a prompt and perceptible lowering of the percentage of sugar in the blood where this has been raised above the normal limit as after the consumption of sugar.

A Pleasant Experiment

SINCE myrtillin is harmless and is administered through the mouth, the activity of a preparation may easily be tested with human beings, instead of by injection into rabbits as is necessary in the case of standardizing insulin. Nurses and office girls are not averse to serving as the subjects of a scientific experiment when this consists essentially of lying on a couch half a day and eating a quarter pound of candy and having their breath analyzed afterwards to see how rapidly they consume it.

Ordinarily when such an amount of sugar is taken on an empty stomach the sugar accumulates more rapidly in the blood than it can be burned up in the body and is only slowly reduced to

the normal limit. But with a small amount of myrtillin the surplus sugar is speedily disposed of in the regular way, partly by storage in the liver and partly by combustion with the oxygen inhaled.

Since diabetes is due to inability to consume sugar, myrtillin is likely to prove of great benefit to the millions of sufferers from this disease, which causes over 15 per cent of the deaths in the United States annually. Dr. Allen reports in the Journal of the American Medical Association for November 5th thirty-six cases of diabetics who have been enabled by the use of myrtillin to increase their diet or reduce their use of insulin or both.

It Acts Slowly and Safely

IT IS not expected that myrtillin will altogether replace insulin, which is invaluable for its quick and effective action in bringing back patients that have already reached the stage of stupor preceding death and enabling them to continue their life and ordinary activities for years to come. But such recovered patients remain throughout life dependent upon daily injections of insulin and are liable at any time to collapse from lack of it or from an overdose which reduces the blood sugar below the vital level.

Myrtillin acts more slowly and safely, for even when taken in very large amounts it does not reduce the blood sugar below normal. Taken daily for months causes no injurious effects. In this respect it resembles the vitamins which in minimum amount are essential factors of our food yet do us no harm if we eat too much of them.

Goats, rats and rabbits do not react to myrtillin. They have no need of it since they ordinarily get it from green fodder. But if they have been kept on cooked vegetables they have need of it as much as human beings. This adds to the argument of the dietitians, who have been telling us that we are wasting the best part of our vegetables by throwing away the water in which they are boiled.

When the discovery of myrtillin was reported to the Association of American Physicians at Atlantic City one doctor eagerly asked if huckleberry pie would not work as well, but Dr. Allen had to admit that the fruit contains none of it. Nevertheless I anticipate that the Blueberry Bloc will find a way to get advertising out of the discovery.

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# The Brantland Heir

Continued from page 15

complicates matters," said Coyle, returning the old man's shrewd gaze. "To try to hurt you somebody must have known that the little chap was your only grandson."

"Of course," snapped Brantland. "Everybody knows that who reads newspapers. I've settled a fortune on him. That's known too. My life's insured in his favor, besides."

The old man frowned like an ancestral painting. In spite of himself Coyle sought a diversion.

"If I may say so," he said, "your son has had a rather wild reputation. May I remain until he returns, so that I can comb through his life to find a clue?"

"This is your job," the old man replied. "If you can settle this matter, that \$10,000 reward goes for you as well as for anybody else."

"Candidly, Mr. Brantland," Coyle said, "I know that you were rather pleased to have your son go to Europe for a year or so after his marriage, and I wonder whether or not anything happened there to bring this about?"

"That's exactly what you're here to find out," said Brantland.

THE testy old man left the matter in the detective's hands and motored back to his own home. Coyle sat for an hour or more in the study, waiting for George Brantland to return, but hoping that Mrs. Brantland might be first home. He then called a servant, the only one in the house, excepting the governess. By bold and outright queries, Coyle obtained nothing from her beyond the fact that she had been in the household for three years, that Mr. and Mrs. Brantland were not overly affectionate and that she had nothing ill to say about the governess, Miss Aker.

"If Miss Aker isn't in bed, please send her here," said Coyle.

He heard the Irishwoman's strident voice calling the governess' name and a quavering reply. Irresolute footsteps sounded on the stairs. Coyle reached for a telephone, and his loud voice screened the further approach of the governess.

"Yes," he barked into the receiver, "Lieutenant Morgan? You've found a youngster answering the description of the Brantland child? Where? Who did it?" His voice rose to an excited pitch: "Hold him there; I'll be right over. At once."

He put up the receiver and, thinking he heard a knock at the door, cried, "Come in." Nobody came. Coyle went to the door and opened it. There was nobody in sight along the passageway leading from the study to the double front doors. He called for the servant, and the Irishwoman peered over the top of a balustrade from an upper floor.

"Where's Miss Aker?" he demanded. The woman nearly fell down the stairs with surprise.

"She went down there," she protested. To follow up her words she descended the stairs and joined Coyle in a hunt through the kitchen, a greenhouse in the rear and back yard and cellars. The governess had vanished.

Coyle hurried in a cab to police headquarters. The sergeant on duty recognized him and advised that Mr. Brantland, father of the kidnapped child, had left. Coyle asked for Lieutenant Morgan. Lieutenant Morgan took Coyle into an interior office, a drab, ill-smelling room. Sounds of sobbing came from a side door. The lieutenant curtly explained that a young woman was in there who had come in search of the Brantland youngster.

"She carried on like a mad woman when I told her we hadn't found him," said Morgan.

"If you don't mind," said Coyle quietly, "I'd like to see her alone."

The lieutenant acceded to Coyle's wish.

Until beyond midnight they remained there, the detective alternately soothing and gruff of tone, the woman weeping

throughout the ordeal, breaking at last into a sobbing story.

When she had gone in care of a police sergeant to the Brantland home Detective Coyle stretched his length in a chair and slumbered, after the manner of a man lacking nerves, until the morning.

Just before noon, still unshaven and dusty from a tiresome country ride, he arrived at Elbert Brantland's law offices. A secretary admitted Coyle to the old man's presence.

"The police are as helpless as ever," Brantland began by way of greeting. "What have you found out?"

Coyle calmly helped himself to a cigar, deliberately lit it and sat down before his pacing principal.

"I think I've learned what you want to know," he said quietly.

The old man paused.

"Have you found the child?"

"No," said Coyle.

"Then why waste my time?" snapped old Brantland.

Coyle smiled disarmingly. "You know better than anybody else where your grandson is," he said.

"What do you mean?" growled Brantland.

"Because you kidnapped him," said Coyle. "But perhaps that isn't the right word when all you did was to have him carried off to your farm at Woodstock."

Old Brantland straightened up stiff and glowering.

"Go on," he said grimly.

"Your daughter-in-law was the tip-off," said Coyle, calmly smoking. "When she went away to her sister's marriage, I knew something was wrong. I had heard about your son being entangled with a girl, and that governess looked fishy—not personally, I mean, but so young and so long in his service. I planted a phony conversation to police headquarters when I knew she was eavesdropping outside the door. I pretended that I was calling Morgan of the Missing Persons Bureau and that he had found the child. Before I could open the door she had vanished. She went to headquarters, where I talked with her." He paused to relight his cigar. "This morning at Woodstock I learned that your chauffeur had stopped on his way out yesterday afternoon to buy ice-cream cones."

Old Man Brantland stared stonily.

"Chauffeurs don't gorge on cones—usually," said Coyle. "Now"—he leaned across the desk and fixed Brantland with smiling eyes—"you know what you set out to discover: whether or not the boy is your daughter-in-law's son. It's a variation of King Solomon's trick, Mr. Brantland, and it worked just as well."

THE old man's features relaxed. His eyes moistened.

"You're right, Coyle," he said huskily.

"I suppose," the detective added, "your son and wife know their business. They only deceived you for what they thought was everybody's good. Now that you know the truth, it's rather creditable to the two women, isn't it?"

Brantland nodded.

"I'd like to apologize to young Mrs. Brantland for thinking harshly of her," said Coyle, rising. "She must have known, and taken the Aker girl into her home. Risky, but damned decent. The man's to blame in this case. I'd like to tell her so."

"That isn't necessary," said Brantland. He followed the detective to the door. "Now you've settled one thing, how can that boy be returned to his home without telling the newspapers?"

"Simple," said Coyle. "He just turned up at your farm. Ran away for a joke. He's too young to be doubted or questioned."

"That ten thousand is yours, Coyle," said Old Brantland.

"Better give the chauffeur five hundred," grinned Coyle. "He had one terrible night with that kid."

# Synthetic Ghosts

Synthetic  
Spirits

By  
JACK  
BINNS



**T**HE more conservative experimenters in television (which is the trick name for radio movies) admit it will be many years before the art will be developed to a point where it can be used commercially. One of the interesting problems encountered with the present-day apparatus is the appearance of "ghosts" at the receiving end. These take the form of weird, ethereal faces, ghostlike in appearance and often distorted. They are the result of interference or lack of synchronization between the transmitting and receiving apparatus.

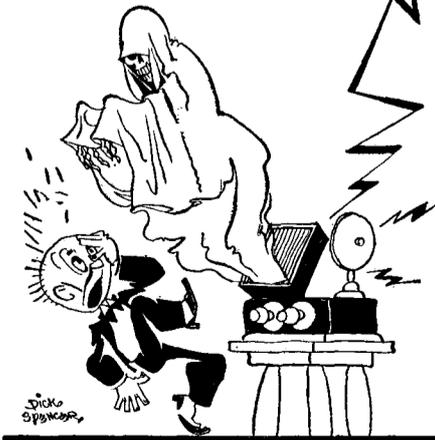
Why not make up a number of television sets as they now are and lease them to clairvoyants? The rental fees would finance further experiments.

## Radio the Life Saver

**D**O RADIO waves affect the human body? Professor J. C. McLennan of the University of Toronto believes that the longer wave lengths, such as those used in transatlantic communication, can be employed to produce in the blood of human beings the temperatures necessary to destroy disease-forming organisms without injury to the patient. This, he thinks, will be vitally important in preventing collapse.

On the other hand, in the experimental transmission laboratories at Schenectady it was noticed that one of the observers had high blood pressure after he had come in contact with very short radio waves. Experiments are now being conducted to determine whether it will be necessary to shield operators as in the case of X-Rays.

This reminds me of the occasion at sea twenty years ago when I leaned over the transmitting key to adjust the spark gap without pulling the main switch. About 50,000 volts passed through my body by way of the head-



gear. How long it was before I awoke I don't know, yet the only harm that resulted was the development of a chronic inability to keep hold of currency.

The experiments of Professor McLennan are based on observations at long-wave stations where the operators showed no increased temperature during the period of operation. It looks as though radio is about to add another form of life saving to its already long record of achievement.

## Getting Out the Vote

**O**NE of the greatest potential sources of national good is the new chain programs sponsored by the League of Women Voters known as the Voters' Service. To be effective it must be handled intelligently and its subject matter, although possibly covering partisan points, should be nonpartisan in presentation.

In this country two of our greatest troubles are that too many citizens vote a party ticket blindly and regularly, and that national, state and local elections are too closely bound together.

We require political parties to formulate policies and principles so that electors can exercise a selection representing the carefully weighed opinion of the majority. What we really have is an electorate that chiefly casts a ballot for a party instead of voting its choice of pertinent principles. If the new Radio Voters' Service can overcome this it will have performed a great public service.

## Electrocute Them

**T**HE Federal Radio Commission has been considering the possibility of staggering the broadcasting channels so that stations on the Atlantic coast will operate five kilocycles apart from stations on the Pacific wherever they have hitherto been operating in the same channel. This is not a solution of the problem, and it will only lead to other complications of interference.

There are but two possible alternative solutions to the congested conditions of the ether: First, complete elimination of three hundred superfluous broadcasters. Second, divide time on the air so that no more than three hundred stations are operating simultaneously throughout the country. Of these two the first is best because it will give immediate relief and also prevent the possibility of squabbles over the choicest time periods.



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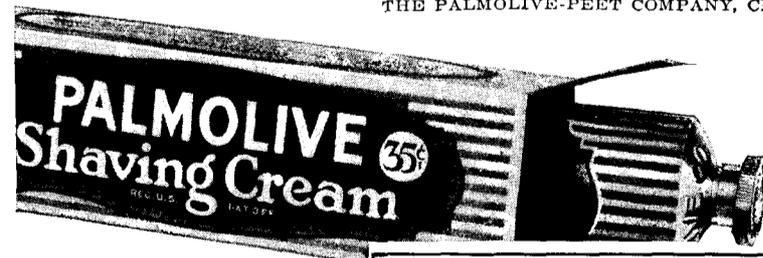
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