

Chemical Gases to Kill Pests

Chemical Warfare Service Co-operates With Agricultural and Interior Departments.

WAR ON RODENT AND INSECT

Permanent Artillery Against the Boll Weevil and Other Pests Hoped for—Research Work Since the War Has Been Fruitful.

Washington.—The War department has recently asked the secretary of agriculture and the secretary of the interior to co-operate with the chemical warfare service of the army in devising peace-time gases to combat the boll weevil and other civic and industrial pests. It is the belief of the army that so many new chemical gases and other chemical products have been developed as a result of research work since the war that at last the government is in a position to extend the hope that it may be able not only to exterminate the rodents that infest the disease breeding quarters of cities, but be able as well to cope with and destroy the rodents and insects that destroy the agricultural crops.

The developments of war must be the implements of peace, according to Brigadier General Amos A. Fries, chief of chemical warfare of the army. Accordingly, the chemical warfare service has begun a campaign to develop gases that will attack and exterminate not only the rats that infest sewers, but the bugs and worms that eat up the leaves and fruits of various agricultural products.

Blackbirds a Pest.

At present, the army is working on a request from Representative Philip D. Swing, of Imperial Valley, California, in the hope of finding something that will exterminate the blackbird pest in that community.

Congressman Swing was a recent visitor at the Edgewood Arsenal, at Edgewood, Maryland, where the chemical warfare gas research is being carried on. He had already asked the government to devise some preventive against the blackbirds. He complained that the blackbirds breed in millions in the delta of the Colorado river, just below the Grand Canyon, and came over in mid-summer to devastate the kafir corn fields sowed by the farmers of the famous Imperial Valley.

As a result of his visit he was assured that the Chemical Warfare Service could devise a poison that would kill some of the birds and drive off the others. He was told, however, that to use it the farmers would have to content themselves with using their products for food and fodder alone, as the chemicals would destroy the re-seeding value of the fruit. In response, the congressman pointed out that as things stand the farmers get neither food nor seed. Mr. Swing was assured that the government would undertake a new series of experiments to attempt to develop something that would both protect the grain and its re-seeding qualities.

The effectiveness of chemical warfare against rodents had already been proven. The army recently sent a group of experts to Cuba with chemicals and instruments for destroying rats and other vermin. The result of their efforts is reported to have been most satisfactory.

Come From Coal Tar.

Many of the chemicals used by the government's synthetic chemists in making up the formulas for wiping out these nuisances come from basic products developed from coal tar. It is because of the importance of this

product in chemical warfare that the government is inclined to encourage the new American dyes industry which has grown up in this country since the war. Prior to the war, practically all of the aniline dyes were German made products. The German research chemists had the secret formulas necessary to develop such products and there was no industry in the United States able to cope with them equally.

In addition to the importance of the dye industry to the first by-products that go to make up both belligerent and peace-time chemical warfare, the government is greatly dependent upon the personnel of the dye factories and other such industries for its war-time personnel. In war time as well as in peace it is a question not only of getting chemists who can master such problems of composition but also of getting trained labor that can handle the great manufacturing processes. It has been an experience of the government, as well as of commercial industries, that, in chemical work trained labor can save what are some times dangerous losses of material and, in addition, can make practical suggestions to the chemists that they never before had thought of.

The present plans of the War department are to get from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior such suggestions as they may care to make on the peace-time work to be done against rodents and pests and then turn the war-time forces of the army to work against them. Both the Agriculture and Interior departments are working on the new problems and efforts are being made to get from the farmers of the country and from the heads of city governments suggestions as to the best problems against which to use the new chemical developments.

Fighting Pine Blister Rust

Imported "Infectious Disease" Has Caused Much Damage Throughout Country.

\$300,000 U. S. GRANT ASKED

Evil Can Be Overcome by Removing Currants and Gooseberries From Nearby Areas—15 States Engaged in Battle.

Washington.—Blister rust has been doing such damage to the white pine forests of the country that concerted action is being taken to overcome the evil by the United States forest service and the United States bureau of plant industry, the forest departments of 15 states, the New York Association of State Foresters and the conservation commission.

Millions of dollars worth of the white pine timber will be injured and great areas of the white pine forests killed unless prompt work is done in carrying out the method that has proved effective in the eradication of the white pine blister rust, says the conservation commission, in a bulletin issued from Albany.

The white pine is recognized as the most valuable timber tree of the eastern United States. The white pine blister rust which attacks it was brought from Europe. It is said this "infectious disease" can be controlled and eventually eradicated by the re-

Wife Starts Distillery, Husband Asks Divorce.

Toppenish.—Charges that his wife "opened up a distillery" are included in the cross complaint filed today by W. B. Gunnoe in answer to the suit for divorce instituted by his wife, Bessie Gunnoe.

Gunnoe, who is deputy county game warden and was formerly connected with the government force fighting predatory animals, says that he dutifully brought home his pay check right along and was assured by his wife that she used his earnings to pay the household bills.

In reality, he asserts, she spent the money in riotous living with one R. N. Brown. Gunnoe alleges that his wife bade him good-by in December, 1919, and that for two weeks thereafter lived with Brown, returning to Toppenish to "open a distillery."

JUDGE PADDLES 4 TRUANTS

Takes Off Shoe in Court and Applies It With Vigor in Historic Way.

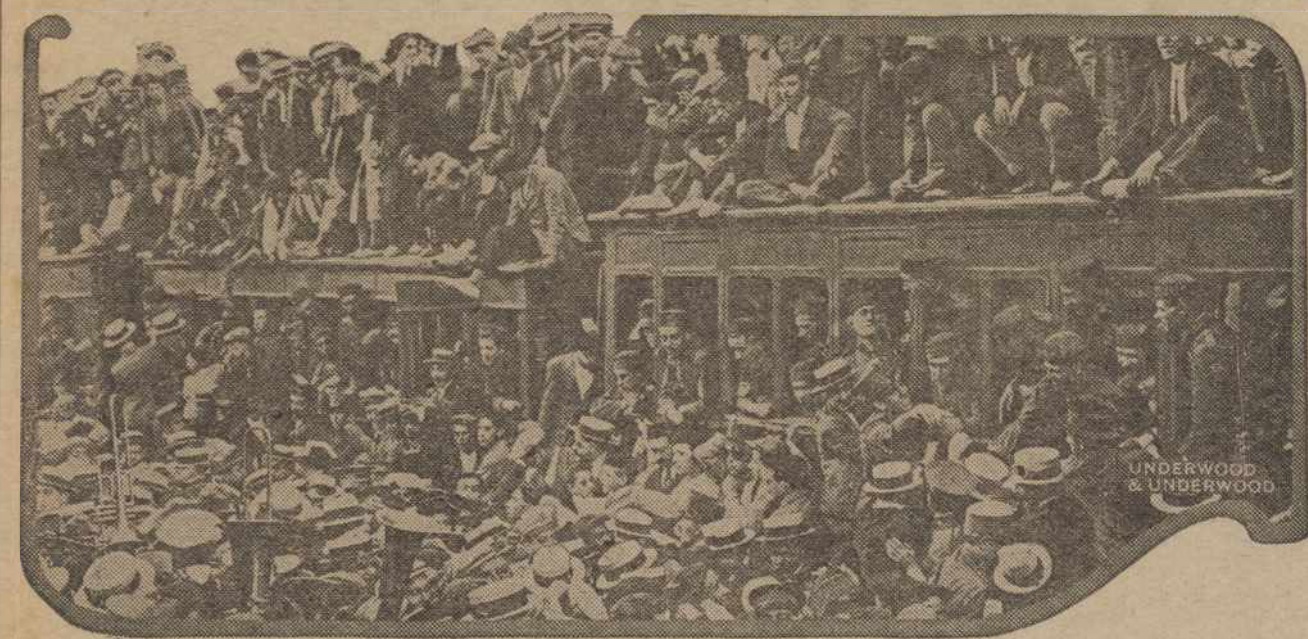
Kansas City.—Judge E. E. Porterfield, presiding over the juvenile court, stopped a session of that court, removed one of his low shoes and spanked four juvenile delinquents with it.

The four boys, in court for truancy from school, told the judge they would not go to school and asked him to send them to the McCune home, the county home for youthful offenders. The judge sent out for a suitable stick, but none could be found. He then used his shoe.

"What about school now?" he asked when he had replaced the shoe.

The four agreed to return to school.

Spanish Troops Starting for the Moroccan War



A troop train filled with Spanish soldiers, is shown leaving Madrid for Santander, there to take ship for Melilla and fight against the Moors.

Trawler Sails to Find Riches

Crew of Twenty Hopes to Salvage \$2,000,000 From Wreck of Steamer.

WAS BURIED TEN YEARS AGO

Liner Merida Rammed Amidships by the Admiral Farragut Off the Virginia Capes—Treasure Went Down With Vessel, but No Lives Lost.

Fifteen men on the dead man's chest. To ho ho and a bottle of rum. Drink and the devil had done for the rest. To ho ho and a bottle of rum.

New York.—But there was no roaring crew of drunken buccaners on board the steam trawler Ripple as Captain Carmichael, a serious, stocky man with steady eyes and a black mustache, climbed the short ladder to the trawler's wee bridge and bawled, "Cast off!" Deck hands unlooped the lines from the ancient bollards on Pier 3, North river, the propeller whirled under the sturdy little ship's counter, and with a lusty cheer from the crew the dingy looking hulk steamed down the river and out to sea.

The treasure-hunting cruise was under way.

Had Robert Louis Stevenson stood on the wharf and watched this Twentieth century Hispaniola puff downstream and fade away in the harbor mists, he would no doubt have gone straightaway to his desk and woven from the fact, instead of fancy, a tale of treasure trove as gripping as "Treasure Island." At first glance the facts might seem less romantic to a staid observer, but R. L. S. would find characters among the Ripple's crew of more than twenty, as fascinating as Long John Silver, the Doctor, the Squire, Jim Hawkins and Billy Bones. To be sure, the Ripple had no piratical parrot to scream, "Pieces of eight, pieces of eight!" but, none the less, there will be quiet conversations in the fore-cabin of the clink of Mexican gold and the heavy clink of silver bullion, and although there is no wallet-worn chart of Treasure Island with its three red crosses and Skeleton Island and Spy Glass hill, yet there are those on board who saw the \$2,000,000 treasure buried.

Buried Ten Years Ago.

This treasure was buried ten long years ago, and not by blowing, swearing, cutlass-bearing pirates, but the ocean itself, and the Ripple's treasure is one that would not scratch the hull of the deepest ship, for it lies 35 fathoms under the surface of the sea, 55 miles east and one-half north of Cape Charles.

The story of the "burying" of this treasure is not a long one, and not so dreadful as it might have been, for not a single life was lost.

May 12, 1911, the Ward liner Merida, a crack 19-knot twin-screw steamer bound from Havana via Vera Cruz for New York, was lurching through the dark 50 or 60 miles off the Virginia capes. She carried 360 passengers, 21 tons of bar silver, kegs of gold coin, valuable jewelry, and a rich cargo of copper and lead from the Mexican mines. It was whispered about on board that \$2,000,000 would hardly buy the shining stuff packed deep in the holds.

It was an ugly night, pitch dark, made more opaque by a thick fog that rolled in toward the capes and wrapped everything in a clammy blanket. Eight bells—midnight—had clang-clanged over the ship some time before, reaching the ears of the watch officer on the bridge in muffled tones, and he struck his hands together smartly and peered into the black ahead. The quartermaster stepped through the darkness to the bell yard to give it a single stroke, for the dim clock in the wheelhouse stood at 12:30 in the morning. But the gong never sounded, for at that moment came a rending crash that pitched officer and man to the deck and brought Captain Robertson running to the bridge.

The Merida staggered, the engine telegraph clanged "Stop," and the next

moment the steamer listed on her side and wallowed in the heavy swell.

The Admiral Farragut of the American Mail Steamship line had rammed her amidships, shearing a hole in her side big enough for a tugboat to enter, and now the two ships lay locked in a deadly embrace.

Wireless Calls for Help.

The Merida's wireless set was smashed, and she lay helpless and mute, but the Farragut backed away in the fog and began to lower away boats. Although the Farragut had a long ragged hole in her bow, her bulk-heads held and she was able to send out wireless calls for assistance while her boats were being lowered to take off the passengers of the sinking Merida. Captain Robertson spoke words of encouragement to the passengers, who ran about the decks overcome with fright, and only half clad. But the captain's calm voice restored order, and lifeboats were lowered in drill-like fashion, while he superintended the launching and told them the Merida would not sink for several hours.

The accident took place not long after the famous Republic-Florida disaster, and Captain Robertson and Chief Officer George W. Nordstrom were anxious to get the passengers off as promptly as possible without loss of life. All hands were in the boats in 22 minutes save the captain and chief officer. In the hurry of the occasion, the purser, who alone had the combination of the ship's safe, had left the ship, and when the Merida did not sink so rapidly as expected, Captain Robertson and Mr. Nordstrom made every effort to break into the safe with axes. But the heavy doors of the strongbox glanced off the blows of ax and sledge, and the two officers finally left the ship with empty hands at 5:20 o'clock. Twenty-five minutes later there was a last gurgle and whirl as the rammed ship nosed under and pitched to the bottom in 210 feet of water.

The passengers were picked up by the Farragut, herself near sinking, and later transferred to the Old Dominion liner, Hamilton, which brought them into New York with only the clothes on their backs.

Captain Robertson has since died and Captain Nordstrom, who was first officer of the treasure ship, is now the only man who accurately knows the position of the Merida, where she lies with holds bulging with rich bullion.

Rockefeller Fails at Salvage.

An attempt was made in 1916 to salvage the valuables, but the expedition which was said to have been backed by Percy Rockefeller and James A. Stillman, ex-president of the National City bank, was unsuccessful, partly on account of heavy weather and partly because the navigators did not have the correct position of the treasure ship.

A short time ago a syndicate was formed to search for the treasure, and it is this syndicate which fitted out the Ripple which sailed recently. This expedition has the co-operation of Captain Nordstrom, and, with expert divers and a new type of diving suit recently invented which is said to make possible work at depths never

reached before, expects to be successful.

The Ripple was chartered and fitted out at Pier 3. Under command of Captain Carmichael she also carries Captains Nordstrom and M. Ruygok, both experienced "deep sea" officers, these latter being the wrecking masters who will have charge of the salvage operations. The trawler carries wireless and a crew of 25, including three divers, one of whom is Frank Orilly, who was chief diver in the salvage work of raising the United States naval submarine E-4, which sank off Walkiki beach, Honolulu, in 300 feet of water. Orilly has worked at greater depths than any other diver has ever done, and with the Merida lying in 35 fathoms, and with her position known, he expects the salvage expedition to be successful.

The men behind the treasure hunting cruise of the Ripple, while they have faith enough in the practicability of the expedition to lend it their backing, do not regard success as a foregone conclusion. They look upon it as a chance, but one well worth taking, since if so well-equipped and managed an expedition fails it will prove once for all that the rich bullion of the Merida is beyond all recovery.

Expedition Kept Secret.

Because they regard it as a chance expedition, they have so far kept their intentions secret.

Among the men who are backing the expedition are said to be Converse F. West of 47 Beaver street and L. F. Gotham of 15 Park row, who are reported to have taken up the expedition as a personal and private venture.

The trawler Ripple, although perhaps lacking the piratical air that a good treasure hunting ship should possess, makes up in stoutness of appearance what she lacks in adventurous mien. She was built in 1910 at Fort River, Mass., for A. Elder & Co., at Boston, and at the outbreak of the war was taken over by the navy for use as a mine sweeper. She measures a trifle over 114 feet in length and has a beam of 22 feet 5 inches and a draft of 11 feet 6 inches. Her decks are littered with salvage gear. On the starboard side forward is lashed a specially built air compressor and large reserve tank to supply air to the divers, and on the port side she carries a 28-foot motor boat to be used as an auxiliary.

Among the crew is Tommy Jonkers, protagonist in William McFee's "Casualties of the Sea," and Tommy is tricked out in the uniform of second mate, an old job to him.

But despite Tommy's high place in literature he is as uncommunicative as the Sphinx concerning the cruise of the Ripple. He meets all questions with a blank smile. "What's that gear for, Tommy?" Tommy smiles grimly. "What time does the Ripple sail, Tommy?" Not a word in reply. And then in a sudden burst of compassion Tommy says: "Ask Captain Carmichael. I don't know a thing about it. Ask him." As a news source Tommy is a notorious failure.

Although at the time of the sinking of the Merida the treasure in her holds was reported to be worth \$2,000,000, Mr. West said that this valuation was in Mexican dollars, and that in fact the actual value at present was probably less.

Florida to Produce Silk.

St. Augustine, Fla.—Florida soon will be producing raw silk on an extensive scale, the result of experiments conducted here during the last four years by Dr. Thomas DePamphillis, who also had studied silk conditions in Italy and Asia. Doctor DePamphillis asserts Florida has many advantages. He has on his place now 2,000,000 silk trays, which are expected soon to be producing 10,000 pounds of raw silk every 40 days.

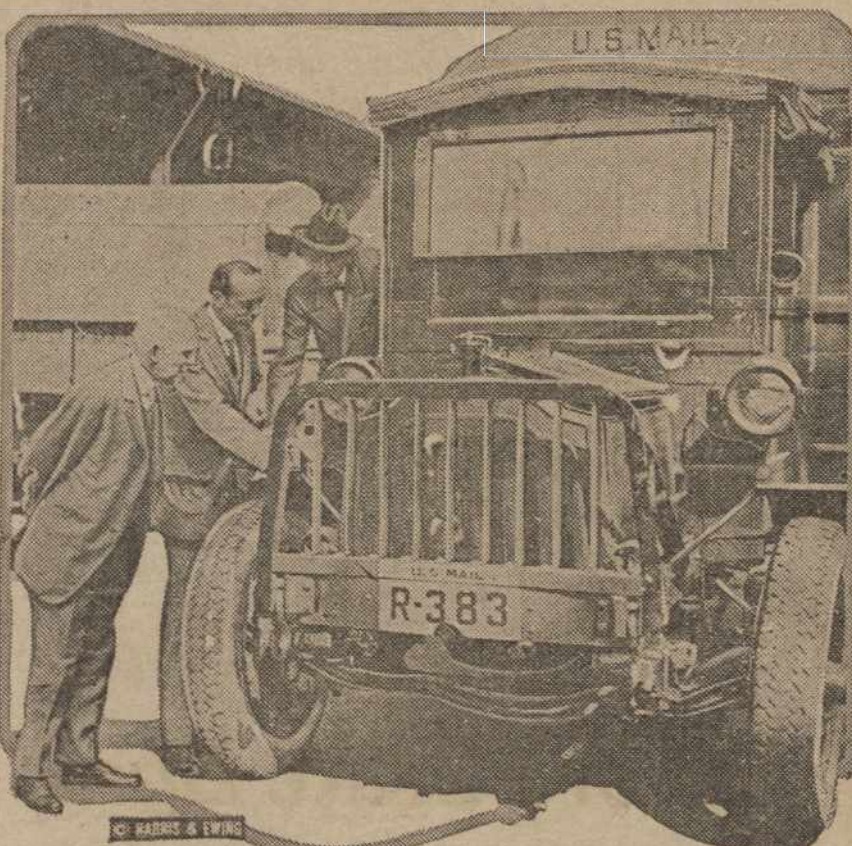
Youth Fined for Painting Dog.

Denver, Col.—Jack Conger, eighteen years old was fined \$10 and costs after he had been found guilty of applying a coat of paint to a dog. Conger, witnesses said, was painting a fence at No. 1165 East Twelfth avenue, when a fox terrier approached him. Conger seized the dog, applied a coat of yellow paint to him and released him.

Only Bulgarian Healthy May Wed.

Sofia, Bulgaria.—The draft of a public health law, placed before parliament by the Bulgarian government, requires that all persons desiring to marry shall produce a doctor's certificate showing their state of health.

Hays Inspecting a New Mail Truck



The finest motor transport service in the world, is the goal set by Postmaster General Hays for the motor service of the postoffice department. Mr. Hays is shown inspecting one of the 3,600 government-owned trucks received from the War department. In the center of the group is Ralph H. Matthieson of New York, who has been appointed special assistant to Mr. Hays for the purpose of reorganizing the service.