

Practical Points.

Anti-diphtheric Lozenges. The anti-diphtheric serum of Professor Roux, of the Pasteur Institute, is now made in the form of lozenges for use during convalescence. They prevent the communication of the disease to others by means of bacteria in the mouths of convalescent patients. The lozenges also render preventive inoculation unnecessary.

The Blind to See. Dr. E. S. London, of the Imperial Russian Institute of Experimental Medicine, who has been conducting some remarkable experiments with radium, makes further details of his discovery public. Dr. London has worked out a method by which all blind persons having some sense of light can be taught to read and write. He says: "The principle of this method is that radium, by means of a screen, gives such a light as greatly increases the capability of a diseased eye to distinguish light from shadow."

Pineapples and Poison. The juice of the green pineapple is accredited in Java, the Philippines, and throughout the Far East generally with being a blood poison of a most deadly nature. *Health* mentions it as the substance with which the Malays poison their kreeses and daggers, and as the "finger-nail" poison formerly in use among aboriginal Javanese women almost universally. These women cultivated a nail on each hand to a long, sharp point, and the least scratch from one of these was certain death.

A Taste of Gehenna. Mr. Melton Prior, the veteran war artist, who has taken part in twenty-four campaigns, is at home for a spell, and has some interesting things to say of the hardships endured in Somaliland. These hardships come from sand, flies, heat, and, above all, water. The water was either brackish or had sulphur in it. Mr. Prior carried water for his own personal drinking from Obbia to Galkayu. On the march the sulphur came out through his skin, soaked through his clothing with the perspiration, and stood in crystals on his things. His belt and revolver case were simply black with white crystals on them. But it did no harm. There was no sickness out there. Men complained of the smell and taste of the water, but it was healthy. Mr. Melton Prior relates how when one column came upon some empty wells two or three men, peering down in the hopes of finding water, were overcome by the sulphur fumes and fell in. An officer was let down by a rope and rescued one, but the others lost their lives.

Pure Brandy. Since the *Lancet* set out on its crusade on behalf of pure brandy, says the *Morning Post*, it has taken a vivacious interest in the constituents of the alcoholic beverages offered for the consumption of the British public. It has lately unearthed some recipes for the artificial production of the cheap wines that grace the table of the householder, and in its current number reproduces a selection of them. For example: To

make Bordeaux wine "it is best to use a light Hungarian red wine. Mix with fifty gallons one pint of vino, two to three ounces of sulphate of iron, dissolved in one quart of boiling water, and one wine-glassful of extract of orris root and a like quantity of raspberry extract." At any rate, there is some wine in this recipe as a base. So there is in the recipe for making burgundy: "Mix in a barrel one hundred parts of white wine, ten of the juice of black cherries, six of crushed large raisins, six of pulverised cinnamon, half of pulverised crude tartar, and fifty of 'must' concentrated by evaporation." That may not be pure burgundy, but it would possibly make a good claret cup for evening parties. The greatest imposition, however, is "champagne liqueur": "Boil eight and three-quarter pounds of the finest loaf sugar with one gallon of water, add gradually, while the water is boiling, half gallon of alcohol, and then filter the mixture." This mixture is the basis of the cheap champagnes, and is given sparkle and flavour by the admixture of sulphuric ether and roots of celery.

Ammonia and Mosquitoes. In England there has been a great decrease of malaria during recent years, in India there has been an increase. A suggested reason for the increase in India, which has been synchronous with the extension of irrigation, is that the irrigation canals have supplied larger supplies of stagnant water in which the anopheles mosquito can breed. A new theory to account for the contrasted decrease in England is that not only has the marshy area of the island been diminished by the progress of agriculture, but that by other agricultural processes the land has been made much less favourable for the development of mosquito larvæ. Dr. Waddell, of Potters Bar, who has been investigating the effects of ammonia on the larvæ of mosquitoes, has found that a solution of ammonia of 1 in 200,000 is fatal to the larvæ. He suggests, therefore, that the steady nitrifying of the soil both by the material application of nitrates, by "nitrogen," and by the increasing cultivation of the clovers which are nitrogen-fixing plants, the English soil has become permeated to some small extent by ammonia, and this has almost entirely checked the spread of the mosquito in England. He further suggests this as a suitable preventive in hot countries.

The Termites Pest. M. Loir, who installed a Pasteur Institute at Buluwayo, and was also requested by the Government of Rhodesia to study the best means of destroying the destructive ants called termites, has given the results of his investigation to the Académie des Sciences, Paris. The ant-hills, or termitories, are 4 to 5 metres high, and hollowed with a great gallery, which is prolonged underground by a series of smaller tunnels more than a metre deep, going to the cell of the queen, whose function is to lay eggs. The ants are so ravenous that in Buluwayo Park they had to plant fifty trees to preserve one. The carcasses of dead animals are consumed within an hour. Books, papers, clothes, boots, and the wood of implements are eaten. In fact, the stability of dwellings is threatened by the insects. The damage at Buluwayo is estimated at over £6,000 yearly.

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