

Serum for Measles

Medicine

A medical progress note prepared by the American Association for Medical Progress.

The use of convalescent serum from the blood of a person recently recovered from measles is serving to check severe epidemics of measles in cities where it is possible for the health department to obtain this serum. Where the epidemic is predominantly among very young children, however, it becomes difficult to obtain a sufficient supply of the serum, which must be obtained from adults or from older children. In a recent outbreak in Providence it was necessary, according to press reports, to restrict its use to children under four. It will therefore be interesting to follow further reports of the use of measles "anti-diplococcus" goat serum which has already been used with some success in a Chicago epidemic.

This serum was furnished by Dr. Ruth Tunnicliff of the John McCormick Institute for Infectious Dis-

eases. In collaboration with Dr. A. L. Hoyne she succeeded in immunizing goats and in producing a serum which is both antibacterial and antitoxic—which can be counted on, that is, both to destroy the bacteria associated with the disease and to neutralize the poison that they give off. The serum was used for a small group of patients in the Cook County Hospital who had been exposed to measles. Sixty-three per cent. were successfully protected. The majority of those who developed the disease experienced it only in a light form. No complication occurred in any of the patients treated in this way, and there was no instance of serum sickness in the entire series. The experimental work seems to point to the possibility of producing a permanent immunity with little risk, by the use of a serum which can be secured in sufficient quantities to meet all the demands.

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Cuba Part of Mainland

Archæology

The theories that dry land once united Cuba with the peninsula of Yucatan and that aborigines of Cuba may have been descendants of the famous Maya race of Yucatan are being discussed as a result of discoveries at Lake Mampton in the province of Pinar del Rio.

A group of American naturalists and archæologists, cooperating with the Cuban naturalist, Dr. Carlos de la Torre, has just made soundings and excavations at this lake and has unearthed pots and other utensils bearing designs and inscriptions like those of the Maya civilization. In the same Cuban province, Dr. De la Torre has found fossil remains of mammals of a species which still exists in Mexico in the hills of Yucatan and Campeche.

Old Maya legends that tell of the flooding of much land support the theory that long ago these animals wandered afoot across what is now the Straits of Yucatan. Much later, when only the high land of the region remained above the sea to form the island of Cuba, it is suggested that the human migration took place by boat. It is believed that Maya chiefs who had been vanquished by more powerful chieftains fled with their people to the unexplored island to the east and there hid from pursuit.

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Egyptian Vase Factory

Archæology

A mysterious Egyptian site occupied during the third dynasty, 2900 to 2850 B. C., has been found in the northern hills of the Fayum region. Near a gap in the hills which gives easy access to the Upper Desert and where even now there is the camel track to Giza, are great gypsum-plaster works. Here have been found immense quantities of sherds, pots, and typical flint tools which had been used in the industry.

The gypsum outcrop is of remarkable purity, and of a depth of 15 feet. There is no sign of the burning which would have been necessary to convert the gypsum into plaster, and evidently the material was exported in a raw state. Alabaster vases and dishes were evidently also manufactured on the spot in large quantities.

This quarry probably provided the fine quality gypsum plaster used at Sakkara, but none of the fine alabaster vases which were made in such numbers on this site have yet been discovered in the tombs of the Old Kingdom. The so-called alabaster vases known from this period are of different and inferior material.

Remains of the stone circle shelters used by the workmen are found nearby. These are the earliest dated examples of the structures yet found in Egypt.

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NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE

Natural History



Whip Scorpion

Travelers in the Southwest are always warned against a terrifying creature called the "vinegarone", but more often done out of Spanish into "vinegaroon", and sometimes spelled as two separate words, "vinegar roon". These fearsome beasts are said to have a constant hankering to insert their stingers into human flesh, preferring especially the ankle of a tenderfoot. And once you are stung, they tell you, your doom is sealed. The vinegarone, every good Southwesterner will take oath, is rank pizen and sure death. In Florida you will hear the same story, except there it is the "grampus" that is the coroner's best friend.

Much smoke is often sent up by a very small fire. The creature known as the vinegarone is really a most awe-inspiring little monster, looking like something between a big tarantula and a scorpion, with a pair of wicked claws thrust out before him and a long, thin, wire-like tail trembling behind. When handled or otherwise disturbed, he gives forth an odor like vinegar, whence his name. And his bad name isn't all tall tales to scare the tenderfoot; many of the natives believe them implicitly.

But the vinegarone, or whip scorpion, is as harmless as he is ugly. He does not pinch with his claws, he has no fangs with which to bite, and his long tail carries no sting. He is simply a big, shy, somewhat stupid evolutionary cousin of the really vicious scorpions, that has in the course of his racial development lost all his venom. He crawls the earth seeking what he may devour, but since he devours mostly vermin, he should be rated as a friend of man rather than as a dreaded destroyer.

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