

That could go on indefinitely, it might seem, until a string of victims accumulated.

In actual life, it seems that the Indian sentiment was to avoid needless piling up of tragedy. Honor of the family was generally saved by taking wampum rather than blood.

Escape, the first thought of murderers in the white man's America, seems to have been the last resort of the Iroquois killer. He had little hope of casting suspicion on the wrong man, and still less hope that mystery would swallow up the situation. In so small and closely organized a society as the

Iroquois Indian world, personal grudges and hates were too much public property for murder crimes to remain unsolved.

There was no way for the Indian slayer to brazen it out. Escape meant fleeing to another tribe, asking refuge. If they needed warriors badly they might take him in; otherwise they would add his scalp to their collection. Or, he could vanish into the wilderness to become an outcast, there to starve, or to wander hermit-like until some Indian came along and dispatched him. Killing strangers was permitted, by the crime code in those days.

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fection with measles, within a period of a few days, determines in large measure whether the disease will develop in the susceptible children. In this respect, measles is like tuberculosis.

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PHARMACOLOGY

Candy Pills Not For Children

NO ONE in his right mind, of course, would think of letting three-year-old Susie eat her fill of chocolate-coated or pink candy laxative pills. Mother keeps them on the top shelf of the family medicine chest and the manufacturing pharmacist may even label them Not For Children.

Susie, however, cannot read the label and she has a way of getting her hands on things not meant for her and, unfortunately, of putting them into her mouth. When they happen to be laxative pills, the results are too often tragic.

These pills generally contain strychnine, a poisonous substance. The amount of strychnine in each pill is not very great—1/120 grain—not enough to hurt an adult. One of them might not hurt a child either, but the danger is that the child who gets at them unobserved does not stop with one. Children have been known to eat as many as 80 to 90 of these pills. (Turn to page 198)

MEDICINE

Convalescent Serum, Hygiene Preventives of Measles

WITH measles on the rampage and new cases being reported at the rate of over 30,000 a week, particular interest attaches to the latest reports on how the disease spreads and on results obtained with convalescent serum as a preventive measure.

Preventive serums have captured the popular fancy, perhaps because of their appearance of magic. A prick of a needle, a "shot in the arm," and presto! your body is endowed with a mysterious, invisible power that protects you against diphtheria or typhoid or some other dreaded malady.

In the case of measles, convalescent serum from the blood of recently recovered measles patients seems to give a fair measure of protection. Equally important, however, are less dramatic hygienic measures.

Measles spreads more rapidly in congested districts and in homes where the hygiene is poor, two New York physicians, Drs. Samuel Karelitz and Bela Shick, the latter of diphtheria test fame, have just reported (*American Medical Association Journal*, Mar. 23). They class as homes of good hygiene those in which the sick child is isolated from other children at an early stage of the disease.

A study was made by these physicians of 106 children who had been exposed to measles. All had been exposed to the disease for from two to five days. All were given convalescent serum in the same amounts. The serum gave no protection to the children who lived in

homes where the hygiene was poor. It protected over half of the children in homes where good hygiene prevailed. Eighty-three per cent. of children who were in hospitals were protected. Children coming from careless homes must be given much larger doses of measles convalescent serum if they are to escape the disease.

These child specialists also report that the degree and frequency of in-



RARE WATER

In the tube which Prof. Hugh S. Taylor (right) is indicating with his pipe are ten drops of water very rich in triple weight hydrogen. The apparatus shown was used to produce these precious drops from 75 tons of ordinary drinking water. At the left is Dr. Pierce W. Selwood who did the research under the direction of Prof. Taylor, at Frick Chemical Laboratory, Princeton. (See SNL, March 23)

Largely as a result of such happenings, some six hundred children under five years of age died in the United States during a three-year period. Census reports make the figure a little less than this, but other reports indicate that it may be higher. In Canada, official statistics show 52 such deaths in a three-year period.

In an age peculiarly devoted to protection of children, it would seem that this wholly avoidable loss of children's lives could be prevented. Besides greater watchfulness on the part of parents, doctors advise more specific remedies for the situation.

Entire removal of strychnine from the formulas of these laxative tablets is one measure recommended by two Toronto physicians, Drs. John R. Ross and Alan Brown, who report to the Canadian Medical Association the extent of this

menace to small children. The same suggestion has been made by physicians in the United States.

Laws requiring a "Poison" label on medicines containing strychnine were recommended both by the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association.

Physicians themselves are taken to task for their share in the present situation by the editor of the Canadian Medical Association's Journal. (March) Doctors have been too ready to consider these tablets harmless, the editor says. Furthermore, patients have drifted into the habit of taking these tablets because doctors have not taken the trouble to prescribe suitable treatment leading to permanent relief of the condition for which the candy pills are taken.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Robinson Crusoe's Isle Made National Park by Chile

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S famous isle in the Pacific has been declared a national park by the Chilean government. (*Nature*, Feb. 23)

That probably means a greater wave of public interest in one of the world's romantic islands. More tourists will cruise out on steamers to see what a proper island for castaway adventures should look like. Larger crowds will inspect the scenes where the original lonely Crusoe—Scottish mariner Alexander Selkirk—built his shelter, hunted goats, and watched for the ship that would rescue him.

Meanwhile, Chilean decree has also given national park status to another famous Pacific "sight," Easter Island, where an outdoor art gallery of great stone faces has long puzzled seafarers and scientists.

But this second newly created island park will probably have fewer tourists—souvenir hunting ones, certainly—for the Chilean government's aim is to protect Easter Island, not to make it more popular. The impressive sight of hundreds of stone portrait figures on the island hillsides has been endangered at times by persons damaging or carrying off statues, and other relics as well. Easter Island lies 2,000 miles west of Chile and over 1,000 miles from its

nearest island neighbors. But that long haul over which any prize piece of the island's heavy art must be carried in order to get it anywhere has not always deterred collectors.

With stronger government supervision of Easter Island and its antiquities, science can take renewed interest in clearing up the mysteries of the "loneliest inhabited island in the Pacific." Two scientific expeditions had already made the island their goal this season, in the hope of solving the riddle of the great stone faces. (*See SNL*, Nov. 17, 1934).

It is conceded that natives carved the figures, some of which weigh full 40 tons. Natives pushed and slid the stone giants from the quarry down the hillsides.

But that does not explain enough. Science wants to know whether the stone faces represented gods or native residents, and why they were carved at all, and why some were little fellows in stone, and others towered over 30 feet high. Science wants to know why the statue-making stopped abruptly, as it did one day with an unfinished masterpiece still at the quarry.

Besides the statues, unique in Pacific art, Easter Island had another ancient and mysterious distinction. Its people

could read and write, and in all Polynesia they were the only islanders who could.

Attempts to read the writing have given only partial success. And students of man's history want almost even more to learn whether natives on Easter Island made that great invention of a writing system for themselves, or whether they brought or borrowed the invention from somewhere else.

Where Did it Come From?

Most important of all, scientifically, if the Easter Islanders did import their writing system, from what direction did they get it? It is of great historic interest to know whether a people so remarkable was linked culturally to Indian civilizations of South America or to some Asiatic homeland.

Easter Island, now a Chilean sheep ranch, is on no beaten tourist cruise track, and is not likely to be. One supply ship a year, private yachts, and occasional wandering ships touch on the shores of this world famous island.

Crusoe's Island, Juan Fernandez, on the other hand, is distinctly tourist conscious. Two volcanic islands, less than 500 miles from Chile, compose jointly what is known as Juan Fernandez. Both are included in the park designation, and both have natural features of interest, but it is Crusoe's particular island that attracts the public.

Memorial Tablet

There has long been a memorial tablet where Selkirk watched day after day through his four years of solitude, waiting for the ship that finally did arrive to rescue him. The tourist steamer is always met by a Crusoe costumed in goat skins and attended by Man Friday. Visitors find that, as castaway islands go, this island has much to recommend it. There are beautiful forest scenes, great ferns, streams, and wild life, including gamey fish and the famous wild goats that Selkirk hunted for food and clothing.

Selkirk and Crusoe blend inextricably into one on Juan Fernandez. Daniel Defoe, who is generally supposed to have based his story on Selkirk's experiences, chose to say that his hero Robinson Crusoe was cast off on an island in the Orinoco River in South America, but that discrepancy in geography never seriously worries Juan Fernandez sightseers. The shift in geographic location was a mere fictional touch. Selkirk-Crusoe is real, and his island proves it.

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