

of those century years whose number is not divisible by 400. Thus 2000 A.D. will be a leap year, but 1900 was not.

Eleven days had to be dropped by England and the colonies—including America—to bring the calendar in line when the new type calendar was adopted in 1752, almost

200 years after it came into use in some European countries.

But the Gregorian calendar has never been accepted by all Christian Churches, for calculating Easter or even for calculating other Holy days.

Science News Letter, March 17, 1951

MEDICINE

Khellin Aids Angina

More than three-fourths of a group of heart disease patients are helped by drug extracted from a Middle Eastern plant relative of hemlock.

➤ MORE than three-fourths of a group of heart disease patients have been helped by khellin, drug extracted from a plant that grows wild in eastern Mediterranean countries and which is a botanical relative of the hemlock that killed Socrates.

The good results with the drug in trials at Boston City Hospital, Boston, Mass., are reported by Drs. Harold L. Osher, Kermit H. Katz and Donald J. Wagner.

The patients, 32 in all, were victims of angina pectoris. The angina pains became less frequent and less severe in 26 of them, and these 26 were also able to perform more exercise before the angina pain stopped them.

Fourteen of the group had been incapacitated before khellin treatment was started. Of these, nine were rehabilitated to the extent that they could go back to work.

One of these is a 57-year-old man with arteriosclerotic heart disease who has had angina pectoris for 18 months. Progressively lessening ability to exercise forced him to give up his work as a laborer. For several months he averaged two or three attacks of angina heart pain every day in spite of

marked restriction of activity. After khellin treatment was started, he had only three attacks in two weeks, and his exercise tolerance increased from 20 to 34 trips on a standard exercise step test.

Continued treatment reduced attacks to one in 43 days and enabled him to perform 54 trips on the two-step exercise apparatus before pain stopped him. He returned to work as a laborer and for three months has been "carrying on a moderately strenuous occupation without difficulty."

Another patient who got similar benefit from khellin treatment for three and a half months has been back on his job and remained in good shape for two months without taking the drug.

Two other patients have also been able to get along for two months without taking the medicine. Such let-ups in the disease sometimes come spontaneously, but in these four patients there had not previously been such improvement.

The khellin was given in the form of sugar-coated pills taken four times a day, after meals and before retiring. Sugar pills identical in appearance were given either before the khellin treatment was started or after a period of khellin treatment, to check on any possible psychologic effect of taking a new medicine.

Details of this trial of the drug are reported in the NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE (March 1).

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PHARMACY

Pharmacists Urged To Stock "Bal"

➤ STOCK BAL as part of your public emergency service, the nation's pharmacists are urged in a report from their national organization, the American Pharmaceutical Association (JOURNAL, Feb.).

BAL, short name for British Anti-Lewisite, is at present the only known specific antidote for poisoning by heavy metals such as arsenic, mercury and gold. It was developed in England during the early days of World War II to counteract the

effect of Lewisite, poison gas containing arsenic. Kept hush-hush during the war, it was released for civilian use at the end of the war.

The manufacturers of BAL at times have received frantic telephone calls from all over the country asking that a supply of the chemical be flown immediately to the bedside of a patient who has swallowed bichloride of mercury or a child who has eaten rat poison containing arsenic. It has not always arrived in time, the pharmaceutical association reports.

Every hospital and retail pharmacy should have at least a 10-vial package on hand at all times with complete directions for use, Dr. James H. Lade of the New York State Health Department urges. He has recently had a supply of BAL stocked in 128 laboratory supply stations throughout the state for free distribution to all physicians in case of arsenic and mercury poisoning. But, he points out, physicians would not normally turn to a health department laboratory for such a drug.

Many lives would be saved each year, he believes, if the physician could get the drug at pharmacies where he normally would go for a poison antidote.

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PROJECT SHOW—Left to right, beginning at top: Robert J. Kolenkow shows his apparatus for measuring the speed of sound; R. E. Simpson, parts of cyclotron; F. J. Ernst, Jr., hand-made telescope with camera; Mary H. Martin, study of chromosomes; N. A. Wheeler with his home-made cloud chamber; Rhea Mendoza showing her study of the Confused Beetle; D. W. McCollm, rubber chemistry; Lenard Wharton, new set of organic chemical compounds; John T. Sabilia, instrument for measuring wave intensity; John J. Demkovich, Jr., with his optical instruments; Katherine M. Lyser with turtle she studied; and John M. Dennison with his geological column of Mineral County, W. Va.

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