

MEDICINE

Chemical Treats Keloids

► **SUCCESS WITH** a new treatment for ugly, often itchy and painful keloids was announced by Dr. Theodore Cornbleet of the University of Illinois College of Medicine at a meeting in Chicago of the American Medical Association.

Keloids are an abnormal growth of connective tissue. They often appear in scars from wounds and burns. Many atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki developed keloids.

X-ray treatments, freezing with liquid nitrogen, and surgical removal followed by X-ray treatment are methods that have been used in the past to treat these stubborn growths. In many cases, "the cure is worse than the disease," Dr. Cornbleet said, pointing out that for that reason nothing may be done.

The successful treatment he reported was to inject the keloids with an enzyme chemical called hyaluronidase. This body chemical is also sometimes called the "spreading factor."

Dr. Cornbleet gave this treatment to 11 patients, nine of whom had old, hard keloids that had been present for several years. Two of the patients had many pea- and bean-sized

keloids from previous acne. Two had the ordinary crab-like type across the chest. The rest had bulky keloids on their bellies, mostly the result of surgical operations.

The treatment was successful in all cases. Pain, tenderness and itching gradually waned and disappeared. The keloids softened and shrank to three-fourths or one-half their original height above the skin. The remaining excessive tissue wrinkled and was then cut away. None of the keloids returned after this treatment.

Hyaluronidase was successful, Dr. Cornbleet believes, because of its ability to soften the glue-like mass that holds cells together in body tissues.

This chemical is also proving useful in prevention of kidney stones, Drs. Arthur J. Butt and Joseph Q. Perry of Pensacola, Fla., Ernst A. Hauser of Cambridge, Mass., and Joseph Seifter of Philadelphia reported.

For this condition, patients get injections of the chemical every 24 to 48 hours. Its effect in preventing formation of sediment in the urine can be seen within 30 minutes. Formation of new kidneystones is halted and growth of existing ones is stopped.

Science News Letter, June 21, 1952

MEDICINE

First Allergy Tests

► **MANY OF** the basic facts about allergy and about immunity to diseases were discovered as a result of scientific interest stimulated by studies of jellyfish 50 years ago.

The golden anniversary of this work, the discovery of anaphylaxis by Drs. Ch. Richet and P. Portier, has just been celebrated.

It started when Dr. Richet was cruising in the Indian Ocean on the yacht of the Prince of Monaco, a famous naturalist. Dr. Richet, assisted by Dr. Portier, experimented with the poisonous, hive-producing principle of a stinging jellyfish, the Portuguese Man-of-War.

When he returned to France, he collected the hive-producing chemical of the stinging nettle, a form of sea anemone, and injected this into dogs. The first injection seemed harmless enough. But if a second injection was given several weeks later, the dog became acutely sick. Many animals thus treated died.

The first dose of the "stinging" principle primed the dog's system to make antibodies, some of which fastened to the tissue cells, sensitizing them to the "stinging" principle. With the very next injection of the "stinging" principle, called antigen, there was an antibody-antigen fight which eventually resulted in cellular damage and functional change in the sensitized tissues of the dog.

Dr. Richet's conception of this loss of

natural immunity to the "stinging" principle which followed the first injection was called "anaphylaxis," meaning removal of protection, in contrast to "prophylaxis" meaning favoring protection.

Science News Letter, June 21, 1952

ICHTHYOLOGY

Tagged Sturgeon Migrates 200 Miles

► **A LONG-DISTANCE** travel record for the Pacific Northwest was hung up by a white sturgeon caught on hook and line in the Chehalis river.

The fish, released two and a half years ago in the Columbia River near the mouth of the Sandy River, swam 200 miles before being hooked. When tagged at the point of liberation the young sturgeon weighed six pounds. When caught it weighed eight pounds and was over four inches longer.

The Oregon fish commission has recovered 600 of 6,000 sturgeon tagged and released in the past 30 months. Only two others besides the record breaker have been recovered outside the Columbia River system. One of these migrated to Tillamook Bay and the other to Willapa Bay.

"We have been conducting the tagging experiments as part of a long-distance pro-

gram to learn more about the migratory habits of sturgeon," said Arnie J. Suomela, state fisheries director. "The briny trek of the fish that met his death on the Chehalis is the longest we have noted. We do not know whether there are records elsewhere of any longer migration having been made."

Science News Letter, June 21, 1952

MEDICINE

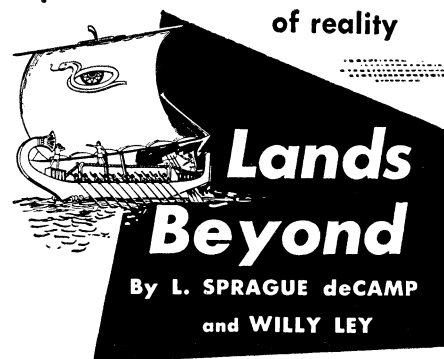
Banthine in Veins Relieves Kidney Pain

► **PATIENTS WITH** multiple sclerosis and others with acute kidney colic can be helped by a medicine now chiefly used for stomach ulcer patients. The medicine is banthine. Its use in these other conditions, and a warning against giving too much of it as an ulcer medicine to men with prostate gland trouble were reported by Drs. Jack Lapidus and Austin I. Dodson of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, at the meeting of the American Medical Association in Chicago.

The excruciating pain of kidney colic can be relieved in three to five minutes by an injection of banthine into the veins. Multiple sclerosis patients can be relieved of one of their most distressing symptoms, failure of normal bladder function, by taking banthine in pill form.

Science News Letter, June 21, 1952

The latest discovery
about the *terra incognita*
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