

recently attributed to heart disease may be explained through the balloon-swallowing experiments reported by Drs. Lester M. Morrison and William A. Swalm, of Temple University, Philadelphia. More successful treatment of both heart and digestive disorders resulted from the findings, the Philadelphia doctors declared.

According to the balloon experiments, the sudden deaths may be due to distention of the stomach acting through the vagus or other nerves like a hair-trigger mechanism to cause sudden changes in the heart or its arteries. The changes may produce fainting, the severe pain of angina, and even sudden death with or without stoppage of the heart's arteries.

In the experiments, the tiny balloons were inflated after being swallowed. Two patients with angina pectoris and two with other forms of heart disease experienced severe distress as a result of the inflation. The attacks were promptly relieved by release of the gas in the balloons.

An intimate connection between the nerves of the digestive tract and those of the heart was shown, the Philadelphia doctors said, by the fact that consistent and analogous changes in the tracings of the heart's action were produced by blowing up the balloons in three of the four patients.

The results of the experiments apply especially, it was pointed out, to patients with angina pectoris who also have disorders of the stomach and intestines. Treatment for such patients, planned as a result of the experiments, consisted in giving antispasmodic drugs to quiet the nerves that are intimately related to the heart; a strict diet arranged to avoid foods tending to form gas; and instruction to the patients never to eat when tired or nervously distraught. Surprising improvement followed this plan of treatment, it was reported.

Science News Letter, May 27, 1939

Meerschaum Pipe Chemical

THE ESSENCE of a meerschaum pipe, a chemical known as hydrated trisilicate of magnesium, has been giving good results, in both England and the United States, as a remedy for stomach ulcers, Dr. Manfred Kraemer, of Newark, N. J., told members of the Association.

Out of a group of 90 patients with long standing, severe recurrent ulcers, 79 were benefited by the "seafoam" chemical used in making the pipes to which it gives its name, and 73 have been free of symptoms for periods ranging from three to eighteen months.

Advantages of this form of magnesium over other drugs used to combat acidity in ulcer cases were reported as follows: The chemical has no injurious effects and does not incite the intestinal tract to undue activity. Its acid-neutralizing action is gradual, which is valuable because acid is secreted in the stomach over a period of hours. It can probably remove acid from the ulcerated areas by absorption in addition to neutralizing acid in the stomach.

Science News Letter, May 27, 1939

Save Them if You Can

THE IMPORTANCE of pulling teeth and cutting out tonsils to prevent or cure ailments elsewhere in the body has been greatly exaggerated, Dr. Hobart A. Reimann, of Philadelphia, declared.

Ten years of this practice, as reported in medical literature, have failed to prove a relation between infection in teeth and tonsils, Dr. Reimann reported on the basis of a study by himself and his associate, Dr. W. Paul Havens.

The general idea of systemic disease arising from a focus of infection in one part of the body cannot be denied, he said. Such a relation exists in the case of boils that lead to blood poisoning. But the routine extraction of teeth or re-

moval of tonsils in the hope of influencing general systemic or remote disease is not warranted, he declared.

Even in the case of acute colds, inflammation of the inner ear, bronchitis and pneumonia, removal of the tonsils failed to lessen the attacks, one study of 1,000 children over a ten-year period showed.

A tooth should be removed when it is definitely beyond repair or if a chronic abscess is causing pain, swelling and other local symptoms, the Philadelphia doctors stated. Similarly, tonsils should come out when the patient is having repeated sore throat or if the tonsils are chronically inflamed. Aside from these conditions, their findings failed to show good reason for removal of teeth or tonsils.

Science News Letter, May 27, 1939

"Corpse Come to Life"

TAKING on permanently the appearance of "a corpse suddenly come to life" may be the fate of those who use nose drops containing silver, such as argyrol, or similar preparations, warned Dr. Ben L. Bryant, of Los Angeles.

The condition, characterized by a bronzed-blue or slate color of the skin that has been termed corpse-like, is known medically as argyria. It comes about from the chemical action of light on the silver which has deposited in the tissues following use of silver-containing drugs. Methods have been devised for determining the amount of silver that will cause argyria to develop, but no very successful methods for causing the discoloration to fade have been developed.

Science News Letter, May 27, 1939

GEOLOGY

Bring Meteorite Fragments From Arabian Desert

FRAGMENTS of a meteorite that fell near Wabar in the Rub'al Khali, heart of the Arabian desert, and of silica glass formed by the hot blast as it struck, have been added to the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History. The specimens were brought out by an oil geologist, who visited the inaccessible site in 1937.

The silica glass is of peculiar interest because it is full of microscopic globular flecks of iron from the meteorite. The theory is that the heat of impact was so great that part of the iron and some of the desert sand were vaporized, and then condensed into the iron-impregnated glass.

Science News Letter, May 27, 1939

SCIENCE NEWS

LETTER SUBSCRIPTION COUPON

To Science News Letter, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Start my subscription to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER for 1 year, \$5
 Renew 2 years, \$7

Name _____

Street Address _____

City and State _____

(No extra postage to anywhere in the world)