

Edward Wright's translation of John Napier's "Mirifici logarithmorum canonis descriptio," brought out in its second edition at London in 1618, where we read p. (4): "The note of Addition is (+) of subtracting (-) of multiplying (x)." This is taken from a part of the book under the heading, "An Appendix to the Logarithmes," the authorship of which is not given, but is probably to be attributed to Samuel Wright, who is reported to have been the editor of the book. Accordingly, the symbol \times occurring in Oughtred is probably a modification of the letter x that was first introduced at least thirteen years earlier, and probably by Samuel Wright.

FLORIAN CAJORI.

Cambridge, November 25, 1914.

ANTARCTIC ADVENTURE.¹

THIS full account of the life and work of Scott's northern party is a welcome addition to the longer story of their work by Commander Victor Campbell in "Scott's Last Expedition."

It was originally intended by Captain Scott that this party, of six men all told, should make their base on King Edward Land. When ice conditions prevented this they searched in vain along the coast of Victoria Land for a suitable landing until they had no alternative but to make use of Cape Adare, Borchgrevink's old winter quarters. Commander Campbell was well aware of the drawbacks to this place, from which it is impossible to sledge overland in any direction, but he had no choice in the matter. Either the party must land there or return to New Zealand in the *Terra Nova*. The winter at Cape Adare was spent in comparative comfort and the account reads like that of any other antarctic winter under modern conditions of equipment. A well-equipped party, in good health, need suffer no particular inconvenience nowadays in a polar winter. Sledging in spring along the sea-ice to the north proved impracticable, and in this respect Commander Campbell and his men had the same experience that almost all explorers have had in the south. No travelling can be more precarious than that over sea-ice in the vicinity of open water.

But it is the story of the second year's adventures which is the most interesting part of this book, for it was then that the author and his companions went through an almost unique experience. The only comparable story in the annals of the south pole is the wintering of Gunnar Andersson and two companions of Nordenskjöld's Swedish Antarctic Expedition in 1903 in a stone hut at Hope Bay, Louis Philippe Land.

The *Terra Nova* had picked up the six men at

Cape Adare early in January and landed them four days later at Evans' Coves, about 270 miles to the south. From there they were to be taken by the ship on her return to New Zealand in March. The *Terra Nova* failed in three attempts to reach them, and so they were left to their own resources. But we cannot understand why these six men were landed with only six weeks' sledging provisions, and skeleton rations for another four weeks. Nor does Mr. Priestley's account make this arrangement clearer to us. He admits, in fact, that Commanders Pennell and Campbell had agreed that if the shore party were not picked up by March 18 they were to resign themselves to spend another winter as best they might. At the time, no doubt, they both thought this eventuality a remote one: "we would all have sworn that if there was one place along the coast which would be accessible in February, this would be the one."



FIG. 1.—A glacier table. From "Antarctic Adventure."

But it was a risk that should never be taken in polar exploration if it can possibly be avoided.

The party spent the winter in a snow cave hollowed out of a drift, eking out their scanty rations with seal meat. They had a hungry winter, but appear to have been cheerful and in comparatively good health throughout. Commander Campbell and his comrades deserve congratulations for this achievement. In October they sledged southward along the coast to the main base of the expedition at Cape Evans. Doubtless this journey was impractical in winter, but we would have liked to read the reasons which decided Commander Campbell to winter under these difficult, not to say precarious, conditions, at Evans' Coves rather than attempt the retreat to Cape Evans, some 250 miles, in late autumn. It is not on account of new discoveries and scientific work accomplished that this volume is important, for of new discoveries the northern party had few,

¹ "Antarctic Adventure. Scott's Northern Party." By R. E. Priestley. Pp. 382 + maps and illustrations. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1914.) Price 15s. net.

and very seldom does Mr. Priestley reveal the result of their scientific work during the first winter: during the second, of course, little could be accomplished. But the interest of the volume lies in its being a full account of how six men lived through an antarctic winter practically on what land and sea produce, and so proved that this can be done with comparative safety. That is the importance of Mr. Priestley's book, and as such, it should be studied carefully by every future explorer in polar regions. The author has been careful to record every expedient and makeshift he and his comrades found useful in their long struggle against adverse circumstances, and it is all these trifling details that give great value

only so; he often mulcts the public heavily for the privilege.

This is the conclusion forced upon the reader by a perusal of the Report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the question of the sale of patent and proprietary medicines. The anomalies and curiosities of the law and practice concerning these commodities are, the Committee finds, "numerous and remarkable," but as they are not specially pertinent to these columns, the interested reader is referred to the Report itself for examples.

The medicines in question differ widely in character. "At one end of the scale is the valuable scientific preparation; at the other is the mere

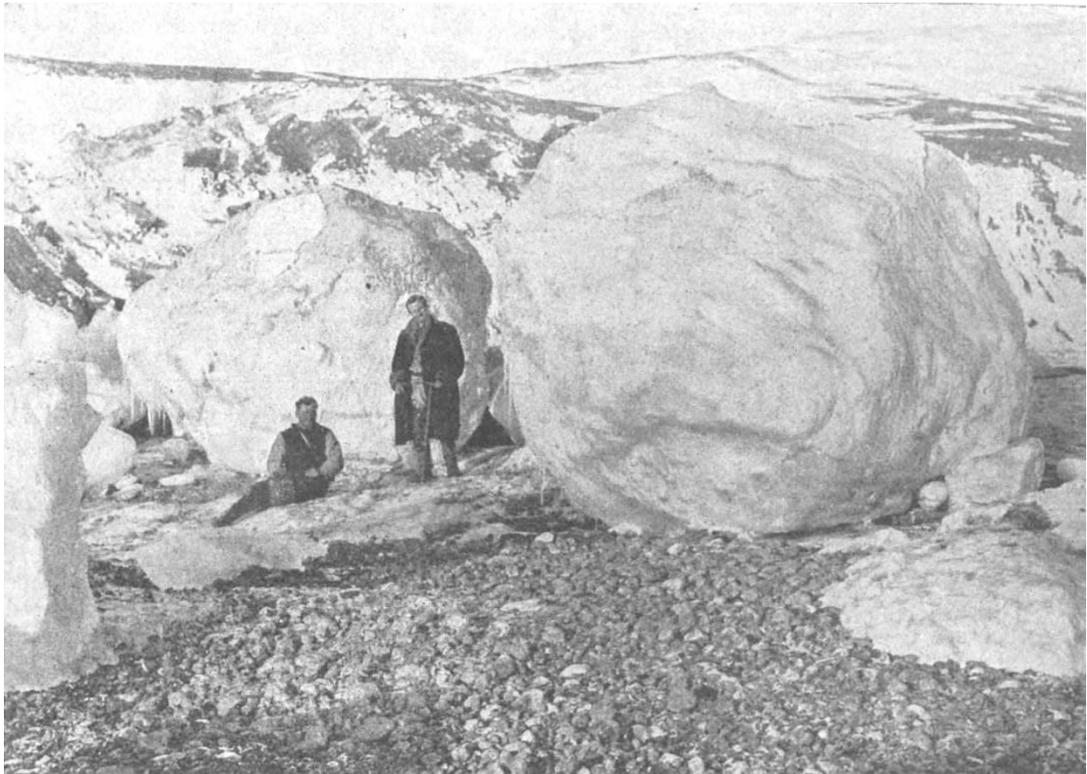


FIG. 2.—Ice boulders hurled up the beach by a heavy swell. From "Antarctic Adventure."

to the book. The work is well illustrated and contains three maps.

R. N. R. B.

SECRET REMEDIES.

IT will scarcely be questioned that the freedom allowed to quackery in this country is unreasonable. To estimate properly the effect of drugs on the progress of disease in the human body is one of the most difficult of tasks, even for highly trained observers; yet any person vending alleged remedies is permitted to assert the efficacy of his nostrums in the cure of ailments, and to use the public as *corpus vile* for them, practically without let or hindrance. Not

vulgar swindle." They are classified by the Committee as follows:—

Class A: Non-Secret.—(1) Proprietary preparations consisting of genuine drugs, synthesised or extracted by skilled chemists and tested by therapeutists. Examples are aspirin, adrenaline, and urotropine. (2) Remedies which owe their value to skilful combination, such as mixtures of bismuth salts with pepsine. (3) Known drugs, with the formula disclosed, but mixed for convenience with inert substances the nature of which is a trade secret—*e.g.*, "tabloids."

It is considered that, with some possible exceptions, there is nothing in this class which calls for interference in the public interest.

Class B: Secret.—(1) Simple household rem-