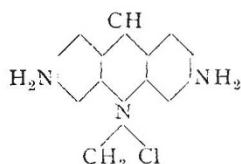


known as flavine or diaminomethylacridinium chloride.



The latter was originally tried by Ehrlich on trypanosome infections, and was found to have a very marked therapeutic effect.

The authors claim that whereas the bactericidal action of flavine is stimulated by the presence of serum (*Staphylococcus aureus* is killed in dilution of 1:20,000 in water, but in 1:200,000 in serum), its power of inhibiting phagocytosis is not high, a concentration of 1:500, as compared with 1:625 for chloramine-T, 1:13 for eusol, and 1:9 for Dakin's solution, being required. For a true comparison, however, it is necessary to determine the relation of the bactericidal action (*i.e.* the minimum strength of solution required to kill the bacteria) to the phagocytosis action (*i.e.* the strength of antiseptic required to reduce the number of leucocytes to half that of the pure serum control), and this ratio, which the authors call the therapeutic coefficient, is much higher than that given by any of the older antiseptics or the dyes referred to. The irritating effect was compared by placing three or four drops of the solution on the conjunctiva (rabbit) for three minutes. Flavine produced no effect in a concentration of 1:200, mercuric chloride 1:500, and chloramine-T 1:25. It thus appears that though flavine does not compare very favourably with chloramine-T in its irritant action, or with the absolute values of the hypochlorites in phagocytosis, its interest appears to lie in its exceptional bactericidal properties, and more especially in the enhanced effect said to be produced by the presence of serum.

The value of the antiseptic seems to centre round this fact, and it will be interesting to learn what special property attaches to flavine whereby it is able to destroy bacteria, whilst not only leaving untouched, but materially activating the antiseptic properties of serum.

In summarising their results, the authors claim that flavine has been found to possess extremely powerful bactericidal and antiseptic properties, which are enhanced rather than diminished by admixture with serum; that in presence of serum flavine is the most potent bactericide of all those investigated for both *Staphylococcus* and *B. coli*, and it is equally efficient for the enterococcus and for anaerobes, such as *B. oedematis maligni*; that flavine, in relation to its bactericidal power, is very much less detrimental to the process of phagocytosis and less harmful to the tissues than the other substances; hence much higher effective concentrations can be employed without damaging the tissues or interfering with the natural defensive mechanisms. The clinical observations recorded by Dr. Ligat and others at the Middlesex

Hospital are very encouraging, and hold out the promise of an extended use of the new antiseptic. It will now be necessary to find a means of supplying the antiseptic at a reasonable cost. J. B. C.

THE SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL STUDIES.

THE daily papers have given a full account of the formal opening, on February 23, of the new School of Oriental Studies in Finsbury Circus, and have reported Sir John Hewett's loyal address, the gracious reply of his Majesty the King, and Lord Curzon's speech describing the objects and ambitions of the school. A brief mention of an occasion so historic seems to be called for even in the pages of a scientific journal. We are interested in all sound and scientific teaching, and the teaching of Oriental languages may ultimately affect the progress of science in Asia and Africa.

It has been objected that the opening of a new and expensive school, costing 14,000*l.* a year, besides the expense of adding a fine block of classrooms to the old London Institution, was not very consistent with the economies which war has imposed upon us. The answer to this objection is easy and, indeed, obvious. The scheme to establish an Oriental school in London fitted to be a rival of the famous schools in Berlin, Petrograd, and Paris was set on foot ten years ago, and the funds now expended were promised or given before war broke out. Moreover, war has opened our eyes to the necessity of making an effort to compete vigorously with the activities—political, commercial, and even scientific and linguistic—of the Germans in Asia and Africa. We have discovered that their industry was rarely disinterested, and that political propaganda was too often at the root of "peaceful penetration" in the field of missionary, scientific, and linguistic effort.

Even if that were not the case, it was a reproach and a shame to us that our present enemies had all but secured a monopoly in Oriental learning. Our own Oriental scholars looked to Berlin for recognition, instruction, and aid. Many of them are justly proud of German honorary degrees conferred upon them at a time when Germans were admittedly at the head of the Indianists of the world. They pursued and rewarded not only the classical learning of the East, but the newer studies, ethnological and linguistic, which are scarcely known to our own universities. It was an Austrian priest, Pater Schmidt, who discovered that the speech of the Khasis in Assam, once supposed to be as unique and isolated as that of the Basques in Europe, in fact extends right across the Pacific Ocean to Easter Island. It was in Germany that all the best research was done, all the most learned periodicals printed. It was the Germans who inherited the tradition of Oriental learning set up by Sir William Jones. It was time that this monopoly should be contested.

It is to be hoped that the new school will act in concert with indigenous scholars in India.

Many of these are endeavouring to make the greater India languages fit vehicles for the imparting of scientific teaching. For example, the Vangiya Sahitya Parisat, a learned society in Calcutta, has for some fifteen years past been compiling a vocabulary of chemical and botanical terminology in the vernacular. This is a task in which the help of Western scholars is plainly required, lest there should be misunderstandings and overlapping of effort. So is it also in the field of comparative philology, in which native students are apt to ignore the acquisitions of Western scholarship.

Finally, H.M. the King was happily inspired in suggesting that the pupils of the school may hereafter be "teachers of unselfish government and civilised commerce." Scholarship and science should be disinterested, while commerce should be a loyal and friendly exchange to the benefit of both parties to the transaction. It was, once more, time that the great City of London should recognise that a sound and scientific knowledge of Asiatic and African languages, literary and other, is a necessary part of the extension of British influence in lands where our sole object is to improve the social and physical condition of races which have fallen behind our own standard of civilisation.

At the opening of the school the King was accompanied by the Queen and Princess Mary. On arriving at the school their Majesties were received by Lord and Lady Curzon and Sir John Hewett, chairman of the governing body. The opening ceremony took place in the library, where Sir John Hewett, addressing the King, said they took the King's presence as a sign that his Majesty was fully cognisant of the importance to the Empire of the study of Oriental and African languages and civilisations on a scale which Great Britain, alone among great countries of the world interested in the East, had not hitherto regarded as necessary; and they had planned that the school should be at least equal to the Oriental schools in foreign capitals, and adequate to Imperial needs.

The King, in the course of his reply, said: "I am glad to be the patron of the School of Oriental Studies, and it gives me particular gratification to take part to-day in the ceremony of opening this fine building in which the school is henceforth to carry on its work.

"I cannot sufficiently emphasise the wide scope and vast importance of that work. The school will afford fresh opportunities of study to those services which have been the pioneer of progress and the instrument of good government in India and Egypt. It will furnish with a fuller technical equipment the pioneers of commerce and industry who in each successive generation undertake the duty of upholding the honoured fame of British trade in the East. Its work will serve to develop the sympathy which already so happily exists between my subjects and those of my Far Eastern ally, Japan. But more than this is to be looked for from the school.

"If it happily succeeds in imparting to the pupils sent out as teachers of unselfish government and civilised commerce a clearer comprehension of the thoughts and lives of the diverse races of the East, the good effects of that success will extend far beyond the immediate and tangible results. The ancient literature and the art of India are of unique interest

in the history of human endeavour. I look to the school to quicken public interest in the intellectual tradition of that great continent and to promote and assist the labours of the students in these departments of knowledge, to the mutual advantage of both countries."

After the termination of the proceedings their Majesties inspected the new school. They were accompanied by the Lord Mayor, Lord and Lady Curzon, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, Sir John Hewett, Mr. P. J. Hartog, and Dr. Denison Ross, the director of the school.

GEORGE MASSEE.

MYCOLOGISTS in all parts of the world will learn with great regret of the death of Mr. G. Masee, which occurred at Sevenoaks, on February 17, after a brief illness. George Edward Masee was born at Scampston, in Yorkshire, about 1850, and at the age of ten was sent to school in York. He early showed a taste for drawing and natural history. At the York School of Art he gained the national medal for the year, and when about seventeen years old published a paper on woodpeckers in the *Intellectual Observer*. Later he studied botany under Spruce, a relative of his mother. It was intended that he should follow his father's steps as a farmer, but, always ready for adventure, he readily accepted Spruce's suggestion to visit the West Indies and South America. He travelled in both the eastern and western countries of that continent, and, in addition to making botanical collections, sent home living plants in bulk.

On his return Masee's artistic talent became further manifest through the publication of his drawings in Spruce's "Hepaticæ Amazonicæ et Andinæ." He took up teaching and returned to the study of botany, specialising in fungi and plant diseases. He also got into touch with the late Dr. M. C. Cooke, and after working as a volunteer at Kew for some years he succeeded Cooke in 1893 as head of the Cryptogamic Department of the Herbarium, a post which he held until his retirement in 1915.

Amongst his earlier volumes may be mentioned "British Fungi, Phycomyces and Ustilagineæ" (1891), and "A Monograph of the Myxogastres" (1892). Between that year and 1895 four volumes of his "British Fungus Flora" were issued, the work remaining incomplete. The descriptions in this flora were detailed and comprehensive, and the book has proved indispensable to all British students.

Masee's serious pathological investigations began about 1895, and from that date until his retirement a continuous stream of contributions to this subject flowed from his pen. His "Text-book of Plant Diseases" (1899), in which he made a wise selection from the best work of others, was a really good and useful book, and had perhaps a higher reputation than any other. Its publication marked a distinct epoch in the history of plant pathology in this country. In his larger work, "Diseases of Cultivated Plants and Trees" (1910), many of the author's own views, not always