

the Royal Society in the records of that Society. There is corroboration in "History of the Lodge Rising Star of Western India" by D. F. Wadia. "It was at the very meeting (of the Lodge) held at the Town Hall on 15 December 1843, that four gentlemen were proposed for initiation to be ballotted for at the next meeting. They were Mr. Ardaseer Cursetjee Wadia (the first native gentleman admitted a Fellow of the Royal Society, who had a great engineering reputation and was at this time Chief Engineer in the Government Dockyard) and Messrs. Mirza Ali Mahomed Shoostry, Hajee Hasham Ishphaneh and Mahomed Jaffer, who were leading Mogul Mahomedan merchants of the day."

In 1822 Ardaseer Cursetjee (Wadia) served under his father in the Government Dockyard and became assistant builder. In 1833 he built a small steamer, the *Indus*, in the Mazagon Dock and personally fitted up all machinery. He is reported to have made experiments in connexion with gas lighting and to have fixed up all pipes and gas machinery in his bungalow at Mazagon, Bombay; and it is recorded in Parsi annals that the Earl of Clare, Governor of Bombay, inspected the installation on March 10, 1834, and gave him a 'Dress of Honour'. In 1836 he was appointed non-resident member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1839 Ardaseer Cursetjee (Wadia) went to England for further studies in mechanical engineering. There his services were engaged by the court of directors of the East India Company in the workshop of Messrs. Wards and Keppel. The chronicles further state that he was presented to Queen Victoria on July 1, 1840, and that he thereafter published a book of his notes regarding his travels in England. He returned to Bombay in 1841 and was appointed chief engineer of the Steam Factory and Foundry. In 1849 he was elected vice-president of the Mechanics Institute. He went to England for the second time in 1851; was made a Justice of the Peace in 1855, and retired on pension on August 1, 1857. In 1859 he went to England for the third time; and in 1861 he was appointed chief resident engineer of the Indus Flotilla Company at Karachi, and there he built three or four steamers navigating the Indus. In 1864 he went to England for the fourth time and remained there until his death on November 16, 1877, at the age of seventy.

'Marfanil'

LITTLE has been gleaned, according to the *Lancet* (635, May 13, 1944), from a close watch on German medical publications and practice during this War; but an exception is 'Marfanil', formerly known as 'Mesudin', which is 4-amino-methyl-benzene sulphonamide. It differs from the other common sulphonamides in having the amino group separated from the benzene ring by a methyl group. It is now extensively used in the German army for local application to wounds, being issued as a powder; the powder is used either alone or diluted with nine parts of sulphanilamide. Tablets of equal parts of 'Marfanil' and sulphanilamide are also used. A quantity of the drug captured in North Africa has been tested clinically by three R.A.M.C. officers, Lieut.-Colonel G. A. G. Mitchell, Captain W. S. Rees and Captain C. N. Robinson, who give their results in the same issue of the *Lancet*. They say that no other substance that they have tested has given better results, except penicillin; and they suggest that penicillin used in conjunction with

'Marfanil' may give better results than penicillin mixed with sulphanilamide or sulphathiazole. The anti-bacterial action of 'Marfanil' is not inhibited by pus or other wound discharges. It is almost non-irritating, and is no more toxic than sulphanilamide. It does not destroy epithelium or prevent its growth. It is evident from the other features of this drug discussed by the *Lancet* that further study of it would be profitable. It is, unfortunately, largely inactivated in the blood and is therefore not suitable for systemic administration; but it should not be beyond the skill of chemists to overcome its other drawback, namely, the difficulty of producing it in quantity.

Herbs and Medicinal Plants

DURING the past year, the *Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record* (32, Nos. 1 and 3) included two attractive Guides (Nos. 15 and 16) to the Herb and Medicinal Garden which was opened in 1938. The provision of a medical plant garden was considered justified in view of the large number of plant drugs in use in spite of the recent increase in the number of 'chemical' and 'biological' substances utilized in medical practice. Guide No. 16 includes a survey by A. H. Graves of the use of plants in medicine from Greek times up to the present day, which illustrates the growth of our knowledge from the relatively advanced outlook of the Greeks, through the period clouded by superstitions of the early Middle Ages, finally to the very marked advances of modern times. This survey is written in a style to attract the interest of general and scientific readers, and is illustrated by numerous woodcuts of the activities of the early herbalists. The historical survey is followed by an account by Prof. C. W. Ballard of Columbia University, and collaborators, of the medical uses of the species commonly regarded as drug plants. In the case of some of those officially recognized in the United States Pharmacopeia or the National Formulary, such as *Aloe vera*, *Ephedra equisetina*, *Atropa belladonna*, etc., some indication of the amount used annually and the possibilities of home cultivation within the United States receive comment. In the case of some imported plant drugs, the shortage caused by the present crisis has indicated clearly that the encouragement of home cultivation of the plants and their study with a view to possible synthesis of the medicinal constituents is a matter worthy of serious consideration.

Vesalius and the Struggle for Intellectual Freedom

IN an address delivered before the Washington Academy of Sciences on November 18, 1943, on the occasion of the four hundredth anniversary of the publication of Vesalius's "De humani corporis Fabrica" (*J. Wash. Acad. Sci.*, 34, 1; 1944), Prof. Howard W. Haggard, of Yale University, sees the great classic of human anatomy as less important for its merely technical contents than for its significance in the struggle for intellectual freedom, for the liberty of scientific thought against tradition and authority. Reviewing the progress of medical knowledge through the centuries, he shows that the authority of Galen had helped to blind even competent observers to the facts revealed on the dissecting table until Vesalius published his great book in 1543. Prof. Haggard deals also with the main facts and incidents in the life of Vesalius, and his tragic death from an unknown disease when shipwrecked on the island of Zante on returning from a pilgrimage