

IS A NEW FIELD ABOUT TO BE OPENED IN THE SCIENCE OF BACTERIOLOGY?

In this issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE is printed an article having as its co-authors Arthur Isaac Kendall, Ph. D., of the department of research in bacteriology in Northwestern University Medical School, and Royal Raymond Rife, Ph. D., of San Diego, California. The caption of the article is "Observations on Bacillus Typhosus in Its Filterable State." The article is commended to the readers of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE because it is a preliminary communication calling the attention of the world to a new type of microscope, which, if it fulfills its apparent advantages over any microscopes thus far developed, bids fair to lay the basis for revolutionary discoveries in bacteriology and the allied sciences. Whereas our present microscopes magnify from one to two thousand diameters, in this new microscope we have an instrument for which a magnification as high as seventeen thousand diameters is claimed. This is certainly a long stride from the initial efforts of Van Leeuwenhoek, whose simple instrument may be said to have laid the foundation for the science of bacteriology which later came into being; and by means of which science much of the world's progress, through man's conquest of the infective and other diseases, has been made possible.

It is a source of gratification to know that the development of this new instrument which offers so much for medical research in the future took place in good part in California. The paper presented in this issue by Doctors Kendall and Rife was presented at a meeting of Los Angeles and Pasadena colleagues held at the home of Dr. Milbank Johnson of Pasadena, who induced Doctor Kendall of Northwestern to come West to make some special investigations and tests. The meeting was held on November 20, just as this December number of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE was going to press. The matter seemed so important to the editor that special efforts were made to have the paper appear in this December number. It is hoped to have other communications in future issues.

IMPORTANT CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT DECISION IN RE: EXPERT MEDICAL TESTIMONY

In the Medico-Legal column of the Miscellany Department of this month's CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE is printed a report on a very important medico-legal problem. The particular legal action was carried to the Supreme Court because of the important principles involved. It was Joseph Catton, M. D., of San Francisco, who created the question at issue, through his refusal to testify on behalf of the defendant in a personal injury case. He had been called by the attorney of the plaintiff to make an examination of the plaintiff, and he contended that it would therefore be unethical for him to testify at the request of the defendants; and, further, that the defendants, not having made arrangements to

financially compensate for testimony as an expert, he was therefore not obligated in law to give such testimony. (Report is printed in this issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, p. 472.)

The matters at issue were called to the attention of the Council of the California Medical Association, the Council then instructing the legal counsel, Mr. Hartley Peart, to enter into the case as a "friend of the court," in order that certain important professional interests of a legal nature could be called to the attention of the Supreme Court of California, to which court the case had been carried on appeal.

It is hoped that many of the readers of this journal will give themselves the pleasure and benefit of perusal of the report referred to.

It is gratifying to know that certain principles important to the medical profession were established through this decision of the Supreme Court of California. The fact is that many persons are prone to demand almost everything from members of the medical profession, in strong contrast to the manner in which real and personal property are hedged with legal safeguards. Here again is exemplified the need of constant vigilance and willingness to meet important issues as they arise. The Council of the California Medical Association and Mr. Peart, as legal counsel of the State Association, for their prompt and efficient action have the appreciation of members of the California Medical Association.

COMMENT ON THIS AND THAT

Cyanide Fumigation—Two Deaths Therefrom in Los Angeles.—When California's sister state—Nevada—in lieu of the gallows or the electric chair installed its lethal chamber in which cyanide gas was used as the means of exit from earth for those of its citizens who had been condemned to death, that present day departure from procedures elsewhere established, was greeted with much newspaper comment and discussion. Even yet each such lethal chamber execution receives more than ordinary space in the daily press.

The efficacy of the cyanide method in producing almost instantaneous death is not gainsaid; but to have two young men in Los Angeles die by practically the same method, in a hotel in which one room was presumably infested with vermin (bedbugs), because the official fumigating firm did not completely close a steam pipe aperture leading to the room above, would seem an altogether too heavy a price to pay for so-called more effective modern-day methods of vermin destruction. The city of Los Angeles, and its public health department in particular, have a heavy task in explaining to the bereaved relatives and friends of the two young men whose lives were unceremoniously snuffed out, why such a method of vermin destruction, dangerous even though efficient—unless combined with adequate and meticulous supervision—should have been used.

These two unnecessary deaths naturally caused a furor in the lay press, and rightly so. If the