

THE SENTINEL

TRADE HINTS FROM OUR CONSULS ABROAD.

TREATMENT OF DISEASES BY LIGHT.—Minister Swinson sends from Copenhagen, December 2, 1899, a letter to a Minnesota physician in reply to inquiries as to the treatment of certain diseases by concentrated light rays. The letter reads:

Dr. Finsen's Light Institute was founded in 1896, for the purpose, as expressed in the articles of incorporation, of making and encouraging investigations regarding the effects of light on the living organisms, especially with the view of utilizing light rays in the field of practical medicine.

The corporation numbers among its members men of eminence and recognized authority in the medical profession, such as the professors of the University of Copenhagen in pathological anatomy, and common pathology; and the superintendents of the leading hospitals in Copenhagen.

The institute has gained the confidence and aroused the interest of the public to such an extent that it now receives State as well as municipal aid in the way of appropriations. Its success and growth have been phenomenal. Altogether, some three hundred and fifty cases of lupus vulgaris have been treated, in all of which satisfactory results have been obtained. A large number of cases have been treated experimentally for other diseases of the skin, among them erysipelas and alopecia areata. Scarlet fever is to be experimented with. In an interview which I had with Dr. Finsen a few days ago, he told me that the light treatment as now perfected is so effective that there is reason to believe that every case of lupus vulgaris can be cured by means of it. Dr. Finsen's successful treatment of smallpox by means of red light is also very interesting and ought to be widely known.

Both sunlight and electric light can be used for medical purposes. Owing to its latitude, Denmark is not favorably situated for using sunlight; hence the institute makes nearly exclusive use of electric light. The arc lights used are each of 4,000 candlepower (ordinary street arc lights are of from 2,000 to 4,000 candlepower). Earlier experiments with this same method of treatment have failed because the light used has not been powerful enough.

Dr. Finsen is also experimenting with photo-chemical baths to ascertain how far light is instrumental in supplying the skin with blood. He says that the red color of the exposed parts of the skin is caused principally by light. Heat seems to hinder, and cold to further it.

FIREPROOF MATERIAL IN GERMANY.—A new industry has lately been introduced into this city, says Consul Liefeld at Freiburg, which deserves creditable mention and promises to be a great commercial success.

The business pertains to the treatment of cottons, linens, woolen goods, etc., or any article of fibrous or textile nature, by a chemical process which renders such articles fireproof.

When we consider the amount of property which has been destroyed by fire, and the thousands of lives that have been lost in the flames, we can readily imagine the great benefits and advantages that come from such a discovery. Many a hotel would not have been destroyed if the lace curtains had not caught fire, and many a home would still have been standing if the carpets had been fireproof. The terrible holocaust at the charity bazaar in Paris a few years ago could not have occurred had the curtains, bunting and decorations generally been made of fireproof goods; and it is even possible that many of the unfortunate victims would have escaped unhurt had their clothing been fireproof.

As is well known, the substance usually employed for the manufacture of fireproof clothing, paper, theatre curtains, etc., is asbestos, a mineral silicate, a variety of hornblende, which can be woven or otherwise prepared, and is intusible at ordinary temperatures; hence soiled articles made of asbestos need only be thrown into a fire to be cleaned. Asbestos has, however, several great disadvantages, viz., its high price and its great weight, the specific gravity being about 3.

In this new method the goods that are to be rendered fireproof are to be treated chemically by a very quick process, which does not act on the fiber, so the goods lose nothing in strength, nor does the treatment in any way affect the color or perceptibly increase the weight, and the advance in the price of the article is very little.

I procured some samples and tried some experiments with cloth which had been made fireproof by this new process, and found that no flame or fire is produced, as was the case with similar goods which had not been so treated. Only where the candle flame came into direct contact with the cloth was the fiber charred; but there was no spread of fire, and as soon as the flame was removed the charring ceased. I poured some kerosene oil on a piece of the cloth and ignited it; the oil burned vigorously, but the cloth was simply charred where it had been soaked with oil, and there was no spread of fire. A piece of wood wrapped in thick fireproof canvas was placed for a few moments on the red hot anthracite coals of a furnace, and when examined was found to be uninjured, except where it had been in direct contact with the coal.

It would seem from these experiments that such a fireproof article would be very serviceable for the storing or packing of explosives. There appears to be no reason why the wood used for building pur-

poses cannot be impregnated and rendered fireproof. The industry has been in existence in Freiburg for several years in the manufacture of waterproof articles, such as horse blankets, tenting, etc., and has been experimenting in the fireproof line of work for a long time.

FRENCH WINE TRADE.—The State Department has received a letter from Mr. Henry E. Gourd, president of the French Chamber of Commerce in New York, calling attention to certain statements in a report of Consul Tourgee, of Bordeaux, in regard to adulteration of French wines. Mr. Tourgee, in the report referred to, said that the consumption of wines in France was decreasing, partly because of a belief that the product of the vine was apt to be deleteriously adulterated; and he described a beverage called piquette—the use of which, he said, was superseding that of wine—and stated that it was prepared of dried apples of the lowest grade of windfalls, sliced, including skins, cores, and "inhabitants," without distinction as to quantity or variety, except that the slices must be prepared in a certain way and that decayed or over-ripe fruit should not be used. These statements, Mr. Gourd says, are in direct contradiction with the official returns of the French Government, which show that since 1888, when the consumption of wine was 26,108,000 hectoliters (689,694,036 gallons), it has continually increased until it reached, in 1898, 34,937,000 hectoliters (923,130,729 gallons).

TRADE OPENINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Consul General Stowe writes from Cape Town:

While the representatives here of export commission houses in the United States are cabling large orders for food stuffs, other supplies are wanted by the Government. Contracts for the building of railroads, for supplying the army, jails, prisons, public and private institutions, etc., are open for bids. If our manufacturers, owing to the brisk home markets, do not care to compete at present, they might be prepared to do so after the war, when there will be a "boom." The country will then be short of supplies, particularly in the line of food stuffs, and in many other directions the demand will be large. Vehicles, tools, harness, etc., will be needed. The destruction of furniture and household supplies has already been large. Telegraphic and railroad equipment, lumber, clothing, hats—the countless things required by a country emerging from war—will find a ready market. It behooves our manufacturers and producers to be prepared to obtain a part of this trade.

MELONS IN ITALY.—Consul Hayden, of Castellamar di Stabia, says:

In this portion of Italy, muskmelons at best are very inferior to the American fruit, lacking the sweet flavor of our melon. Strange to say, however, this same melon when reserved for consumption in winter is very acceptable. A custom exists here of pulling the melon from the vine while green, and hanging it up in the open air until winter, when it is eaten. The melon becomes not only far superior to the ripe fruit of summer, but quite equal to the American product. If this system could be adopted in the United States, it might prove of value.

FIRE IN GUAYAQUIL.—Vice Consul General Reinberg, of Guayaquil, reports that on November 27 a fire broke out in the center of the city and within a few hours an entire block, comprising some of the most important public buildings, was destroyed. Mr. Reinberg adds:

Nearly all Guayaquil edifices are of pitch pine, and the water supply is defective. The members of the municipal fire brigade, aided by steam fire engines (the best of which are American), distinguished themselves by preventing a repetition of the memorable calamity of 1896, when in less than 24 hours 83 blocks of the best part of the city were swept away. The loss of the statistical information which was on file in the custom house (and was especially valuable when this consulate general was called upon for information of a commercial character) will seriously affect the completeness of future reports. There is some talk of replacing the old fashioned hand machines with steam fire engines, a water tower, etc., and, in view of the serious menace to property interests, it is probable that steps may be taken, and perhaps the superior merits of American appliances will be borne in mind.

ADVICE TO PROSPECTIVE SETTLERS IN MEXICO.—Consul Griffith of Matamoros writes:

The colonization law of Mexico allows free entry of the effects of intending settlers only to persons who have acquired the legal character and status of colonists, and who come as such to settle in some colony established by authority of a concession granted by the Federal Government. I make this suggestion, inasmuch as within the last two years several companies, with all their household effects, implements, horses, stock, etc., have driven from various sections of the Central States to the Rio Grande intending to cross over and locate in Mexico. Upon learning that the Government of Mexico would allow exemptions only under the above conditions, they were embarrassed, and usually dispersed after having undergone unnecessary hardships and a great deal of expense.

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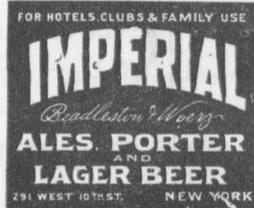
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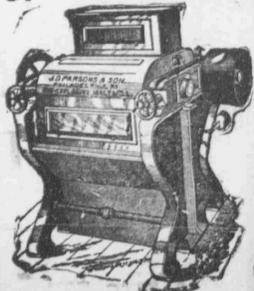


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