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SCIENTIFIC AND SANITARY.

A new form of phonograph recently described before the Berlin Electro-Chemical Society by Herr A. Koeltzow (Nature), July 19) records on a cylinder made of a kind of hard soap. Each cylinder costs only about seventy-five cents and can be used for 250,000 words, owing to a device for removing a thin layer from the surface when it has been completely covered. Thus the cost does not exceed that of the paper required to write an equal number of words, and the instrument will doubtless be widely used, at any rate in countries where existing patent rights do not interfere with its introduction.

The experiments of Debedat, on the application of electricity for stimulating the nutrition of the muscular system, are described in a recent paper abstracted in the Electrical Review, London. The results show sometimes a gain of 40 per cent. in the weight of the muscle, due to application of the current in a particular way, while there was either no gain or else a positive loss for other methods of application. His conclusion is that an induction coil should be used, and the periods of contraction and repose so timed as to approximate to the contractions of a muscle during rhythmic gymnastic movements. Prolonged contraction, as practiced by many physicians, he considers extremely hurtful.

Dr. Maillart (Kevue de Médicine, Paris, March 10) favors the treatment of typhoid with large quantities of water. The prtient should receive from five to six quarts of water daily during the febrile period. The results are progressive subsidence of the febrile process, disappearance of the dryness of the tongue, and a marked sedative influence upon the nervous, circulatory, and renal phenomena, probably owing to the oxidation, solution, and elimination of the toxins produced in the progress of the disease, and also of the dejects. This mode of treatment has no noteworthy influence upon the course, the duration, or the evolution of the disease, is not attended with unpleasant complications, and is easy of application.

In a communication to the London Zoological Society, Mr. Lindsay Johnson describes the results of his examination of the eyes of one hundred and eighty domestic cats, as well as those of all the accessible wild members of the cat family. He concludes that the natural shape of the cat's pupil is circular, though under various degrees of light it assumes every shape from the circle through all kinds of ovals to a straight vertical line. The younger the cat, the greater the tendency to become a pointed oval in ordinary light. In the smaller Felidæ, brilliant sunlight causes contraction to a lin; in the larger, sometimes to a small circle. When a cat is suddenly alarmed, the pupil momentarily dilates; in sleep, it always contracts.

Experiments by Professor Clowes, of Nottingham, England (London Royal Society, May 10), shows that the effects of carbonic acid on a flame is very different according as the flame is fed from a wick or with gas. The percentage of gas necessary to put out the flame in the first case is always nearly the same, being for instance 14 for alcohol, 15 for paraffin oil, and 14 for a candle, but in the second case there is wide variations, 58 per cent. being required to put out a hydrogen flame, 10 for methane,

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26 for ethylene, and 33 for coal-gas. The proportion of nitrogen necessary to extinguish a flame is in all cases higher than that of carbonic acid. The wick-fed flame dies away by dwindling; the gas flame, on the contrary, grows larger and paler until it

Will the storage battery ever realize the high hopes that were once entertained of it? Authorities have not yet ceased to differ on the subject. Mr. W. W. Griscom, whose interesting paper about these batteries, read before the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, is printed in the Electrical World (New York), brings out the point that our knowledge of the chemical changes in charging and discharging is still incomplete, and that the internal conditions are constantly altering in a complex way never before suspected. Plates with precisely the same history, and in exactly similar situations in a battery, may give off currents varying as much as 30 per cent. Much of the difference of opinion among experts as to the efficiency of the batteries is doubtless due to causes such as these, and to the fact that batteries are often worked far beyond their capacity, and that batteries are rated as high as possible, instead of well within a margin of safety, as in the case, say, with steam-engines.