

in each case that it contained boracic acid. Upon the infants being fed on pure milk direct from the cow, they recovered without the aid of any medicine, yet before he discovered the cause of the symptoms several of the infants died.'

The following notes on the use of boric acid and its salts are taken from the *Zeit. für Untersuch. der Nahr. und Genussmittel*, 1902, 678-682 (through 'Analyst,' 1902, 271).

E. ROST 'As the antiseptic action of boric acid is small, comparatively large quantities are necessary to preserve articles of food, and it is quite possible for a person to take as much as 3 grammes daily in his ordinary food. Meats, sausages, milk, butter, margarine, white and yolk of egg, fish, caviare, shellfish, &c., are frequently preserved by the action of boric acid. The author found 3.87 per cent. in dry salt meat and 2.8 per cent. in shrimps. Boron compounds are stated to have no specific action on the enzymes of the stomach and intestines, except as regards their acid or alkaline properties. Borax retards to a small extent the coagulation of milk by rennet; the addition of borax to milk especially when the latter is intended for infant's food, is therefore injurious. Large doses were found to cause local irritation and inflammation in dogs, cats and rabbits, and also affected the action of the bowels. In two experiments on men it was found that doses of 1, 2 and 3 grammes of boric acid retarded the assimilation of albuminoids, the nitrogen contents of their urine being determined hourly before and after taking the boric acid. By taking the temperature of various dogs fed on borated meat, it was demonstrated that assimilation of the food was delayed. Experiments on other dogs showed that only large doses caused a loss of corpuscular albuminoids. It may be here mentioned that no essential difference was noticed between the action of boric acid and borax. A striking loss of weight in the animals was noticed. As this was not due to destruction of albumen or loss of water, it must be put down to oxidation of fat. Apparent increase in the digestion of albumen, shown when very large doses of borax were given, was due to the 'salt' action of the borax, similar results being exhibited by large doses of common salt and potassium nitrate. A large consumption of water prevented these effects.

'Assimilation experiments in the presence of boric acid were carried out on four assistants. During a preliminary period of 5 to 17 days the men were brought into a state of 'nitrogen equilibrium' followed by administration of boric acid (3 grammes per diem) for 12 days. Two of the men then, for a time received no boric acid, and afterwards underwent a second treatment. Finally, some days were devoted to studying the after symptoms of the experiments. Two of the men showed a loss of weight due to loss of fat. The final observations also showed less secretion of urine and absorption of food materials. The two other assistants also showed a loss of weight. These two latter were also chosen for Rubner's experiments (see below) in which the amounts of expired carbon dioxide and water were determined. One of them diminished so suddenly in weight after taking 3 grammes of boric acid daily, that the experiment had to be discontinued. The weight of the other also decreased, but increased when the boric acid was discontinued, and fell again when the latter was readministered. It was not demonstrated by the above experiments, that boric acid affected the appetite. No influence upon health and appetite were noticeable. Boric acid was not found by the author to influence the temperature, blood pressure or kidneys. As the elimination of boric acid by the urine takes from 8 to 14 days, its action is probably cumulative. The author comes to the conclusion that the use of boron compounds in food should be forbidden.'

RUBNER.—According to the author, who comes to the conclusion after numerous experiments, boric acid has an important latent action on the digestive process. Not only the digestive organs themselves, but the whole alimentation is affected. The change produced, which may amount to a loss of 22 per cent. of energy and 30 per cent. of the utilization of nitrogen free food, is a very important fact, and undoubtedly an injury to health, as the amount of fat in the body may be of the greatest importance, and the reduction of the fat must be followed by a rapid fall in albuminoids. Serious results may follow in infant feeding, to invalids, old people or convalescents by borated foods.