

under control before untold harm could be done, and at the same time providing for an earlier and less trying course of treatment for the individuals concerned. Always when a group of people has been examined a small but important percentage has been found to require treatment, and, while radiography in itself will not cure tuberculosis, the post-war possibilities, when numbers of previously unsuspected cases can be taken out of the crowds of everyday life and made harmless to themselves and others, may readily be realised. In the battle against the tubercle bacillus, as in the case of practically every other disease, the whole trend of modern medical thought is to go far outside the sick-room and the pharmacy and to tackle the disease by way of studying not only the individual, but even the whole of society.

Responsible historians have named malaria as one of the major causes of the decline of the Roman civilisation. In the present war, the global nature of which has brought troops of many countries in contact with the malaria-carrying mosquito, the disease has had to be fought vigorously and unremittingly not only in the Pacific and the Far East, but in Europe and Africa as well. Japan's conquest of the Netherlands East Indies, which deprived the Allies of most of the world supply of quinine, made the problem acute from the outset, and in

addition it was known that Germany before the outbreak of war had produced a secret formula for a synthetic quinine substitute.

It was late when the danger was seen in Britain, but British chemists set to work to discover the formula of the German product and succeeded in finding the substitute known as atabrine—but it was being manufactured in only small quantities by the time the supply of natural quinine was sealed off. Fortunately, the United States came to the rescue with mass-production methods, and the drug, which came to be known as mepacrine, quickly became standard treatment in the British armed forces. When nations are no longer at war it is certain that anti-malarial drugs will be put to good use in ridding such countries as India, Burma, Africa, China, and the Pacific archipelagos of this terrible menace to society.

Opportunities provided by the war for study, research and the perfecting of new treatments should result in far-reaching advances in the medical world when peace has been finally restored. There is cause for sober satisfaction in the thought that the one good thing about a war to enforce the unconditional surrender of aggressor nations should be that it has prepared the way for achieving science's ultimate goal—the unconditional surrender of disease.

The Things They Think Of

Latest ideas from the science world:

A synthetic resin glue for wood which sets at room temperature.

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A machine that prints railway tickets as they are ordered.

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Floor wax that can be sprayed on large floor areas, leaving a high-gloss, non-slip finish without buffing.

A new chemical compound that "heightens the speed of intellectual processes"—and is a good "hang-over" cure.

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A method of treating lettuce seed with weak solutions of thiourea to make possible germinations at temperatures as high as 85 to 90 degrees.