that the manufacturers are in error when, in contrasting the comparative alkaloidal value of tea, coffee, and kola in a table in a pamphlet accompanying the above samples, they state that the percentage of caffeine in coffee is 2.25, whereas it is seldom higher than 1.5 per cent.; while in tea it is only given as 0.43 to 0.46 per cent., when our own as well as other experiments have established¹ that the caffeine in tea ranges from at least 2.4 per cent. to 3.5 per cent.

"VINESTAL" AND ORANGE QUININE TONIC WATER.

(SOUTER, MACKENZIE AND CO., CRYSTAL MINERAL WATER WORKS, DOVER, FOLKESTONE, AND LONDON.)

"Vinestal" is the name given to an effervescing beverage which is claimed to possess refreshing and invigorating properties, because it contains a modicum of aromatic spirit of ammonia. On testing we found a small quantity of the ammonium salts indicated so that the water may be regarded as a very mild antacid, stimulant, and carminative. It should not be used, however, indiscriminately. The orange quinine water is strongly and agreeably bitter to the taste, and well charged with carbonic acid gas. It readily yielded quinine on treatment with an alkali and subsequent extraction with ether.

PHENOSALYL.

(BURROUGHS, WELLCOME, & CO., SNOW-HILL, HOLBORN, E.C.)

Phenosalyl is a clear, syrupy liquid consisting of a mixture of phenol, salicylic, and benzoic acids melted together and dissolved in lactic acid. It gives a marked colour reaction with perchloride of iron and is soluble in water and alkali. It is stated to possess an antiseptic power far superior to phenol, while it exhibits no corrosive action, as, for example, on surgical instruments, and it is readily soluble in water. According to Professor Fraipont, solutions of phenosalyl have no corrosive action on the skin, the mucous surfaces remain smooth and slippery, and do not become dried up, as is the case after washing with carbolic acid or corrosive sublimate.

New Inventions.

WHITE'S PATENT MASTICATOR.

THIS should be a very useful assistant to persons who are afflicted with defective teeth. It is unnecessary to point out that the thorough crushing of solid food before swallowing it renders the process of digestion much easier and thus hastens assimilation. Persons who are unable to masticate their food properly in the natural way will, we can understand, find the instrument a great help. To use the masticator it is held in an almost horizontal position with both hands and then worked like a pair of scissors. Of course the food must first be cut into small pieces on the plate with a knife and fork. Dipping the instrument during use from time to time into hot water will prevent it from chilling the food. It has, moreover, the merit of being easily taken apart for the purpose of cleansing. It is manufactured by Messrs. John Weiss and Son, of 387, Oxford-street, W.

NEW GOUGE CUTTING FORCEPS.

WITH regard to the method of prostatectomy published in THE LANCET of April 14th will you permit me to very briefly supplement what I then wrote? I have lately had made by Messrs. Hilliard and Sons a pair of gouge cutting forceps, the use of which considerably diminishes both the

time required for removing the prostate and the risk of wounding the mucous floor of the bladder or urethra in those

FIG. 1.

Actual size, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. long.
Glasgow.

FIG. 2.

cases in which the prostatic tissue is unusually tough and adherent. With the guiding touch of two fingers in the bladder and the forceps in the perineal wound it is comparatively easy to "nibble" away the prostate as close up to the mucous wall as may be necessary without risk of perforation and without much expenditure of time. In the majority of cases, however, the use of these forceps will not be necessary, the prostatic tissue being soft enough to be detached by the finger or by a blunt elevator or a Volkmann's spoon. I append a rough sketch of the instrument, which is made in different sizes and both straight and curved on the flat beyond the hinge. The accompanying illustration represents a straight pair of medium size.

Within the last few days I have seen Professor Macewen remove the obstructing portion of a prostate by an extra-urethral perineal operation, and in speaking of it since he informs me that he has done this on several occasions during the past few years. As this proceeding, albeit attained by a different method, forms one of the essential features of the operation I performed, if not, indeed, the chief feature of it, I feel that this note should, equally with the original account of the operation, appear in the columns of THE LANCET.

JAMES H. NICOLL.

NEW HYPODERMIC SYRINGE.

THE accompanying sketch represents a hypodermic syringe I have devised, which is, I think, an improvement on most existing syringes. The piston-rod consists of a tube with a metal disc on one end, sliding on a solid rod also having a metal disc on its end. On the other end of this rod is a screw-thread, on which the handle of the syringe fits. When the handle is turned the discs of metal are drawn together, thus compressing the packing of the piston. This packing consists of two discs of leather with a pad of indiarubber between them, which on being compressed forms a most perfectly fitting piston. The leather discs, by fitting the cylinder of the syringe closely, effectually protect the rubber from the action of ether or alcohol if such is to be injected. This piston can be tightened even when the needle is actually in the patient. I have known the fluid to leak past the piston when making an injection. The syringe has given me more satisfaction than any I have used. Messrs. Arnold and Sons have carried out my idea excellently. They are prepared to supply similar syringes. The body, made entirely of glass, can be easily rendered aseptic. EDWARD H. BRIEN, B.A., M.D., &c.

Rock Ferry.

¹ THE LANCET, July 1st, 1893