

## LETTERS, NOTES, AND ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE CURRENT WEEK'S JOURNAL SHOULD REACH THE OFFICE NOT LATER THAN MIDDAY POST ON WEDNESDAY. TELEGRAMS CAN BE RECEIVED ON THURSDAY MORNING.

COMMUNICATIONS respecting Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, 429, Strand, W.C., London; those concerning business matters, non-delivery of the JOURNAL, etc., should be addressed to the Manager, at the Office, 429, Strand, W.C., London.

In order to avoid delay, it is particularly requested that all letters on the editorial business of the JOURNAL be addressed to the Editor at the Office of the JOURNAL and not to his private house.

AUTHORS desiring reprints of their articles published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL are requested to communicate beforehand with the Manager, 429, Strand, W.C.

CORRESPONDENTS who wish notice to be taken of their communications should authenticate them with their names—of course not necessarily for publication.

CORRESPONDENTS not answered are requested to look to the Notices to Correspondents of the following week.

Queries, answers, and communications relating to subjects to which special departments of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL are devoted will be found under their respective headings.

### QUERIES.

#### TREATMENT OF OBSTINATE CONSTIPATION.

MEDICUS asks for a suggestion in the treatment (drug or otherwise) of a case of chronic constipation with dryness of faeces, which are generally of a light colour. The patient, whose appetite is good, is too light in weight. Several of the usual remedies have been tried without materially affecting the case. There is also at times considerable and distressing, almost disabling, flatulence.

#### LIABILITY FOR MIDWIFERY FEES.

MEMBER asks for an opinion on the following point: A lady calls and makes an engagement for attendance at confinement—fee proposed by medical man, £3 3s., to which patient agreed. After a fortnight she writes: "Your fee being too high, I have engaged another medical man." Is she still liable to pay?

\*.\* The legal remedy against the patient would be by action for breach of contract, when our correspondent might recover the amount of the fee as damages. We do not, however, advise this, as it is not customary under such circumstances for a medical man to sue his patient, but from a legal point of view it is never permissible for one party to a contract to put an end to it without the consent of the other.

#### WORKS ON INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

A CORRESPONDENT asks what is the most trustworthy, up to date, handy volume on the infectious diseases, their etiology, pathology, and bacteriology.

\*.\* He cannot do better than consult *Hygiene and Public Health*, by Dr. Whitelegge (Cassell and Co.), 7s. 6d.; or if he wishes for more detailed treatment of the subject in question, the second volume of the *Treatise on Hygiene and Public Health*, edited by Stevenson and Murphy (S. and A. Churchill, London), 32s.

### ANSWERS.

ZETA.—Such a claim under the circumstances is not valid. It might be allowed as a matter of kindness and consideration, but there is no legal claim to it.

GOBANNIENSIS should consult a physician of experience in his neighbourhood. We cannot recommend individual practitioners.

DR. W. A. BUCHAN (Plymouth).—Mr. Ernest Hart's letters on "A Winter Trip to the Fortunate Islands," have been republished in pamphlet form by Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co.

#### VACCINATION STATISTICS.

H. P.—Dr. A. R. Wallace's attack on vaccination will be found very completely refuted in Dr. J. C. McVail's admirable book *Vaccination Vindicated*, which was published in 1887 by Messrs. Cassell and Co., London. *Vaccination and Small-pox*, by Dr. E. J. Edwardes (Messrs. J. and A. Churchill), is also a very useful little treatise.

#### TREATMENT OF THREAD WORM.

M. R. C. S. writes, in answer to "M. D." (p. 516): I have found the following prescription very successful where the usual remedies have failed: B. Acid. sulph. aromat. m̄ij; magnes. sulph. gr. v; tr. capsici m̄ij; inf. rosæ acid. ʒj. I would call his attention to the article by Mr. Bland Sutton in the recent edition of Quain's *Dictionary*.

### NOTES, LETTERS, Etc.

#### THE BOARDING-OUT OF PAUPER CHILDREN.

DR. JNO. WILSON RHODES (Didsbury), writes: As an old advocate of the boarding-out system under proper supervision, I quite agree with your leader on the question, but there is another question I want answering,

namely, What is the result upon the health of the children? I would remind those who advocate such a large extension of the boarding-out system that it is facts more than opinions that we require, and I have not forgotten a very important fact that was brought out in Mr. Henley's excellent report on boarding-out in Scotland, and that fact was that the death-rate among the children boarded-out in Scotland was more than double the death-rate in the much abused district schools of England, as children that are so ill as to require constant medical attendance are not supposed to be sent out the very reverse ought to be the case. I hope the inquiry will at any rate answer this question.

#### THE LIVERPOOL VICTORIA LEGAL FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

DR. J. G. MODLIN (Sunderland) writes: I see in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of September 8th a note with comments from Dr. H. W. Haydon respecting the propriety of acting as medical examiner to the Liverpool Victoria Legal Friendly Society. I have acted as examiner for this Society for the last three years. The fees they pay are the same as paid by other assurance companies, namely, half a guinea for cases up to £100, and a guinea for cases above £100. I have never been asked to attend any of those assured, and can say with certainty that, in this town, life assurance is all that is offered by this Society. Medical aid is certainly not run in conjunction with assurance. It may be differently worked in other towns, but whilst the assurance is worked as a life assurance only, as it is here, I fail to see any impropriety in any medical man acting as their medical referee. I should certainly decline to do any medical aid work in connection with it.

\*.\* No exception can be taken to this; it is only when these societies add to their ordinary business some system of medical aid that they tend to run into objectionable practices.

#### A PROTEST FROM THE FENS.

DR. MARTEN PERRY (Spalding) writes: Dr. Richard Bevan (Lydd), in protesting against remarks of Dr. Dickinson in a former number of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, classes the fens of Lincolnshire with the Campagna at Rome. I know nothing of the latter locality, but am quite certain that the fens of Lincolnshire will compare favourably with Romney Marsh, and I think I may say with almost any other district in the kingdom, as respects the prevalence of ague. It is certainly better drained than any other district with which I am acquainted; in fact it is by many considered to be overdrained. I have been residing at Spalding very nearly twenty-five years, and have never met with so severe a case of ague during that period as I had previously seen frequently in Essex. I have not access to the Register of Deaths, so cannot say when the last entry of a death from ague occurred. I have, however, gone through the list of patients at the Spalding Dispensary, and do not find one case entered since March 14th, 1891, and that is called "intermittent," which we now understand to be a very mild form compared to what was formerly known as ague.

#### SMOKE ABATEMENT IN PARIS.

PARIS seems to be awakening to the fact that it is in danger of losing whatever claim it may once have possessed to the title of *ville-lumière*, conferred on it by Victor Hugo, at least in the physical sense. The question of smoke abatement has become one of what French journalists call "palpating actuality," and a competition is invited with a view to the selection of the best method of mitigating the nuisance. Competitors should send details of the method they propose to the Préfeture de la Seine (Direction Administrative des Travaux de Paris, Bureau des Eaux, Canaux et Assainissement).

#### DIETETIC TREATMENT OF OBESITY.

MR. W. TOWERS SMITH (Harley Street, W.) writes: Having devoted some years to this subject, I found it necessary to provide a substitute for bread foods. I applied to a well-known firm of diabetic food manufacturers, and at my suggestion a biscuit was made as follows: 60 per cent. of Soya flour; 40 per cent. of almond flour. I named this biscuit "kalos." My patients used them, and in very many cases their numerous friends, so that I was compelled to check the supply to strangers, and all orders were referred to me. I am afraid some medical men were refused. Under these circumstances I beg to say that any medical practitioner can have them by applying to Messrs. Van Abbott and Sons, 6, Duke Street Mansions, Grosvenor Square.

#### TREATMENT OF SWEATING FEET.

In an article in the *Journal des Praticiens* Dr. A. Vignol, médecin-major of the French army, recommends for severe cases of sweating feet that the soles and the interdigital spaces should be painted with perchloride of iron mixed with one-third of its weight of glycerine. This liquid takes a quarter of an hour to dry, and during this time the feet must be exposed to the air and not dried. The application is to be repeated in forty-eight hours. In this way the epidermis is as it were tanned. It may be necessary to repeat the application at first every month, but subsequently at longer intervals. In the intervals between the application with the perchloride of iron the feet should be washed in vinegar and water night and morning and powdered with salicylated talc or starch and tannin.

#### THE MECCA PILGRIMAGE.

THE Moulvie Rafuddin Ahmad, an enlightened Moslem, contributes, says the *San Francisco News Letter*, to the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL an article on the Mecca pilgrims and the cholera, in which he points out that the pilgrimages as at present conducted are an international disaster. The remedy, he thinks, lies in the power of the Sultan, who should at once appoint a commission to investigate the matter. If the present state of affairs continues the recurrence of the plague at Mecca will diminish the number of pilgrims, destroy the trade dependent upon them, and cause a loss of much of the Sultan's moral influence over the Mahomedan world. This view of the subject from the standpoint of the pilgrims themselves is encouraging and indicates that the Mahomedans are not so bigoted in the matter as has been believed.

## THE "MESSAGE MARKET" OVERSTOCKED.

*Apròpos* of the massage scandal the following letter has been addressed to an official of a London hospital. It speaks for itself, and we can vouch for the genuine nature of the communication:

"Do you know of a *thoroughly competent masseuse* who could nurse and attend upon a young gentleman with paraplegia; catheter, enema, and irrigation required. One who would attend and wait on the patient, and also read to him; and at about what salary—15s. per week? She would be required to make herself generally agreeable and obliging, and not above carrying out things in patient's own manner. He is a medical student. She must be used to massaging the male subject. May I ask for an early answer.—I am, yours affectionately,

"Mr.

"I should require a strong woman, and the better educated the more suitable. I suppose it would be quite impossible for me to get a masseuse for 12s. 6d. a week."

This letter fully bears out our statement that the massage market is overstuffed. The public fully appreciate the fact, and a *masseuse* appears to be regarded by them as a person who not only has to make herself generally agreeable, but who will do anything and everything without question.

**THE REPORT OF THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL COMMISSION ON WORKHOUSE INFIRMARIES.—ACTION OF WAKEFIELD GUARDIANS.**  
We have been favoured with the following letter from the clerk of the guardians of the Wakefield Union with respect to the report of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL Commission on their Workhouse Infirmary. We shall take the opportunity so courteously offered of having a reporter present, and it is greatly to be desired that all boards of guardians would show a like readiness to have their proceedings in these matters reported and discussed, the lot of the sick poor throughout England would then be greatly ameliorated:

Wakefield Union, September 3rd.

Dear Sir,—The attention of my guardians has been drawn to the report as to the Workhouse Infirmary appearing in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of August 18th. I believe it is the intention of the guardians to discuss this report at their meeting to be held on September 19th. I believe that it is not unlikely that the Government inspector for this district will also be present at the meeting. I have written you this in courtesy to yourself, in order that if you so wish you may request the guardians to allow your reporter to be present.—Yours truly, H. BEAUMONT.

## A WARNING.

DR. W. WYNDHAM POWELL writes to us from 145, Cannon Street, E.C., to warn city practitioners against a man who called at his consulting room on September 10th requesting him to visit a gentleman in Coleman Street, whose private card he presented. It turned out to be a hoax, the probable object being petty theft. He is a spare man with sunken cheeks, medium height, and about 28 years of age. His general appearance and dress was that of a broken-down clerk.

\*A man giving the name of Montague Russell, aged 20, described as an actor, was, on September 11th, remanded by the magistrate at Lambeth Police-court on the charge of having robbed, or attempted to rob, some twenty medical men in London. He called at the house of Dr. Arthur Farr in Kennington Road, and said he wished to make an appointment for Dr. Farr to see his sister. Dr. Farr's suspicions being aroused he followed the man, saw him call at eight houses in the neighbourhood, and then gave him into custody.

## PROFESSOR SOXHLET AND THE STERILISATION OF MILK.

AMONG those on whom the University of Halle conferred the honorary degree of doctor of medicine on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of its foundation was Professor Soxhlet, whose name is well known in connection with the question of the sterilisation of milk. The following are the grounds on which the honour was conferred as set forth in the diploma:

"Francisco Soxhlet, qui cum aliis multis et egregiis inventis tunc praeipue disquisitionibus de lactis natura et compositione accuratissime institutis non modo physiologiae et chemiae physiologicae progressum habuisset mediocriter auxit atque ad vivit sed ratione subtilissime excogitata illud primarium infantum nutrimentum integrum conservare et ab omni infectione noxia vindicare docuit cum saluberrimo invento innumerorum hominum valetudinem atque adeo vitam conservatam debere ivre meritoque praedicatvr."

[To Francis Soxhlet, who by his many other remarkable discoveries, and principally by his most carefully conducted researches on the nature and composition of milk, has not only considerably furthered and assisted the progress of physiology and physiological chemistry, but shown by ingeniously devised methods how to keep that first food of infants sound and free from all injurious contamination, to which most fruitful discovery the preservation of the health and even the life of innumerable human beings is rightly and deservedly attributed.]

**LETTERS, COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.**, have been received from:

(A) A. M.; Messrs. Arthur and Co., London; Messrs. Claudius Ash and Son, London. (B) Mr. J. H. Beaumont, Wakefield; Mr. T. Bell, Uppingham; Dr. S. W. Bryant, Kilmalcolm; Dr. R. L. Batterbury, Great Berkhamsted; Dr. L. Booth, Durham; Mr. D. Bradley, Weston-super-Mare; Mr. D. Biddle, Kingston-on-Thames; J. P. Boyd, M.B., Glasgow. (C) Mr. W. H. Clark, London; Mr. H. H. Crickitt, Reading; Mr. E. J. Carter, Tunbridge Wells; Mr. R. T. Cassal, Gainsborough;

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## BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

- Prescribing and Treatment in the Diseases of Infants and Children. By P. E. Muscott. Third Edition. Edinburgh and London: Young J. Pentland. 1894.
- Physical Culture for Men, Women, and Children. By A. E. Tanner. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, and Co. 1894.
- Diet, and Cookery for Common Ailments. By a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and Phyllis Browne. London: Cassell and Co. 1894.
- The Treatment of Wounds, Ulcers, and Abscesses. By W. Watson Cheyne, M.B. London and Edinburgh: Young J. Pentland. 1894.
- Les Eaux d'Alimentation, Epuration, Filtration, Stérilisation. By Dr. E. Grunochet. Paris: J. B. Baillière et Fils. 1894. 5 francs.
- Primer of Hygiene. By Dr. E. S. Reynolds. London: Macmillan and Co. 1894. 1s.
- A Healthy Home. By Francis Vacher. London: *The Sanitary Record* Office. 3s. 6d.
- \*In forwarding books the publishers are requested to state the selling prices.

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