

LETTERS, NOTES, AND ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

COMMUNICATIONS respecting editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, 161A, Strand, W.C., London; those concerning business matters, non-delivery of the JOURNAL, etc., should be addressed to the Manager, at the Office, 161A, Strand, W.C., London.

In order to avoid delay, it is particularly requested that all letters on the editorial business of the JOURNAL should 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, 161A, 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.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.—We shall be much obliged to Medical Officers of Health if they will, on forwarding their Annual and other Reports, favour us with Duplicate Copies.

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

WE CANNOT UNDERTAKE TO RETURN MANUSCRIPTS NOT USED.

THE REGULATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM AND ST. ANDREWS.

SIR,—From time to time, both in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL and in the other medical papers, frequent but spasmodic attention has been drawn to the regulations of St. Andrew's, and Durham Universities, by which the bestowal of the M.D. degree after examination, but without residence, is fettered by the condition that its recipients shall have attained the age of forty years, and complaint has been made that this restriction is injurious, both to the number of those who seek this distinction by deferring it to so late a period, and also it diminishes the number of those who go in for the examination and degree. It is difficult to see why any restriction of this kind should be insisted upon, unless it be looked upon as penal because the men have preferred some other to their own school. It is no doubt advisable that a portion of the curriculum of those who graduate at any university should be spent in the school of that university; but if it be conceded that students of other schools should be admitted to its degrees after examination, why not reduce the limit of age to one at which it would be of some good to those who seek the distinction? Say thirty, or ten years after the possession of a registrable qualification. The possession of the M.D. degree is without doubt of some benefit to its possessors, but under the present regulation of the examining bodies which requires a minimum curriculum of four years for any qualification to practice, which is the same as that required by all the Scotch Universities and by that of Durham, it follows that, granted the same capacity in those who study in London or in the provinces as in those who study in the North, the holders of London qualifications must be at least equal to the graduates of the Scotch Universities. And, indeed, seeing that part of the time spent in the latter is taken up by such subjects as zoology and natural philosophy, it must be at the expense of the purely medical subjects, seeing that these former pass such subjects as part of the preliminary or omit them from the course of study. But still there is a hankering after the possession of a degree in the majority of those who get into practice without it, and the question is, why should it not be obtainable by those who, from circumstances, perhaps, beyond their control, have studied in London, or elsewhere than at the university whose degrees they wish to obtain. My object in writing is not to discuss the relative merits of the universities and the licensing bodies, but to draw attention, with a view to united action, to the following propositions.

1. There exist a number of men in the profession who, not possessing a degree, are desirous of obtaining one.
2. Those holding qualifications to practice obtained after examination and are same curriculum as is required by the universities, are unable to do so until forty years of age, when its value to the possessor is much diminished.
3. A memorial from these disqualified ones should be presented to the universities who now make this restriction as to age, requesting that all doubly qualified men after the age of thirty be admitted to examination for the degrees under the same conditions as now exist, excepting this change.

Asking the co-operation of those who desire such a change, with a view to united action.—I am, yours truly,
THIRTY-ONE.

MR. C. E. ABBOTT (Braintree).—It is inconvenient to have to deal with written matter of the kind to which you refer, and we could not undertake to return or be responsible for MS. sent to us. Perhaps the report has been reproduced in the local paper, in which case a marked copy of the paper can be sent to us, and shall receive attention.

LIGHTING OF DOCTORS' BROUGHAMS.

SIR,—On perusing your note on the above subject, I thought it would interest those who are anxious of making the most of their time, to have as much information as possible. I have a window in the roof vertically over the position in which a book is held when sitting in the centre of the carriage, the hinges are in the front, and the props for keeping open the window (when required) are at the back. The size of the window should be 12 inches by 8 $\frac{1}{2}$. For the ingress of fresh air, I have the side windows hung raised one inch from the bottom, so that the current goes directly up, and not down on the shoulders and back, as is the case when ventilation is only obtained by letting down windows.

The advantages of window-ventilation are fully illustrated in Mr. Pridden Teale's excellent work, *Diagnoses to Health*. At night, I have an oil-lamp, which exactly fits and fixes on the little window at the back; when sitting to the side, the light from which falls well on my book. The glass of the lamp is on hinges, and is opened and the lamp lit by myself from the inside. The coachman has access from the outside. No smell or smoke gets into the carriage. The lamp can be easily removed, and the window slid back into its place. The entire cost of lamp and fitting is two guineas, and the annual expenditure for oil and wick about one shilling and sixpence. I find the light sanitary, satisfactory, and cheap. Mr. Brewer, coach-builder, 10, Portland Road, Notting Hill, who has attended to my carriage, will be pleased to give any personal information on the subject.—I am, yours truly,
Ladbroke Grove, Kensington Park, W.

W. SINCLAIR THOMSON.

THE TREATMENT OF ABORTION.

SIR,—I am always astonished at the passages in letters and other communications in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL which speak lightly of evacuating the uterus of its contents in cases of abortion. To me, the operation is beset with difficulties, inasmuch as the parts are quite unprepared for the introduction of, at the most, more than three fingers; and hence the impossibility of exploring satisfactorily the cavity of the uterus, and of "sweeping out" its contents, and definitely arriving at the conclusion that everything has been got rid of; for seldom do the napkins assist the operator, and the introduction of the hand into the vagina of a primipara, for instance, seems very harsh treatment. The result, I always find, is doubt, delay, and disappointment, and at times danger to the patient.

I was asked recently to attend a woman who, I was told, was threatened with premature labour. On my arrival, I found there had been considerable flooding, and the discharge of a small mole, with a cyst in the centre large enough to contain a walnut. The patient, aged 30, was the mother of two healthy children, and her labours had been natural and easy, with the exception that the perineum had been considerably torn on the birth of her first child, necessitating two or three stitches. She was under the impression that she was six months gone, but had menstruated up to within seven weeks, and feared something unusual in her condition.

The uterus could not be perceived on palpation through the rather thick walls of the abdomen; but, by digital examination *per vaginam*, it was found to be decidedly larger than natural, and the os uteri dilated, with considerable bleeding going on; but I could not reach far enough to ascertain the condition of the cavity of the uterus, and relieve it of its contents, if any were present.

My object in writing is to ask some associate or associates, who do not experience my difficulties, what are the measures to be adopted to ensure bringing such a case to a satisfactory issue. I may add that I look with a certain amount of dread at a case of abortion, though I have attended hundreds of confinements, and have performed most of the capital operations of obstetrics; and, as good fortune will have it, without the loss of a single mother.—I am, etc.,
A MEMBER.

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The following additional subscriptions have been received and paid to the account of the "Hind Fund" at Messrs. Coutts's Bank.

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VIOLENT ITCHING IN AN ELDERLY GENTLEMAN.

SIR,—I have a patient, an elderly gentleman, who is greatly afflicted with violent itching of the skin, particularly in the bends of the elbows and backs of the knees. I have failed so far in affording more than temporary relief. He is afflicted with feeble action of the heart and shortness of breathing, for which he is compelled to take brandy and water several times a day. His quantity of urine is very scanty, not amounting to sixteen ounces day and night. Any information will be thankfully received.—I am, etc.,
M.D.

EXTRACTION OF TEETH BY INDIA-RUBBER RINGS.

SIR,—It is to be hoped that neither "M.B." whose query appears in the JOURNAL of March 1st, nor any of your readers, will be led, by the vague accounts which have been published, to attempt the extraction of teeth by India-rubber bands. This method has probably been suggested by an accident which sometimes happens, mostly from ignorance or carelessness, in the employment of India-rubber bands for drawing irregular teeth into a better position. In such cases, if not watched or if not properly attached to a regulating plate, an India-rubber ring may slip beneath the free edge of the gum; and, if allowed to remain, will quickly give rise to dental periostitis, and suppuration, loosening, and partial extrusion of the tooth. As the tooth, in consequence of the swelling around, rises from the alveolus, the ring, if a tight fit, will slide along the root, especially if this be single and conical. The ring, if left long enough, no doubt may in this way gradually separate the tooth completely from its attachment. This would be most easily accomplished in the case of an upper incisor or canine, which, in protruding, would be unopposed by the teeth of the lower jaw; and it might be possible, after days of suffering, to extract one of these teeth by the proposed method. In the case of any other tooth, the suffering would be much more severe. It would be impossible to bring the jaws into use without pressing upon the exquisitely sensitive tooth, and mastication would be impossible. It would need a sad bungler with forceps to inflict so much unnecessary and prolonged suffering, as must be caused in most cases by an attempt to extract a tooth by an India-rubber band.—I remain, your obedient servant,
6, Wimpole Street, March 1st, 1884.
HENRY SEWELL.

MAMMARY CANCER AND ENLARGED AXILLARY GLANDS.

SIR,—I have just come upon a case that may be of some little interest. A woman, aged 52, recently consulted me about an attack of bronchitis. She had undergone an operation for cancer in the breast about twelve months ago. Three months since, she felt a large swelling in her axilla, which, she was informed, was a new cancerous growth. Fearing another operation, she left her medical attendant and consulted an empiric, who pretended to cure cancer. He gave her a lotion, and informed her that it would cure her. She used the lotion most perseveringly, and affirmed that, without doubt, it had made the swelling less; but, as I have only seen her twice, I am unable to form any opinion as to whether there be any change or not. From examination of the lotion, it consisted of a solution of the black sulphide of mercury and oil of cloves. I should be glad to have an opinion expressed as to its resolvent properties, if it has any, as she positively holds that the swelling is growing less under its application.—Yours truly,
Inquirer.

* * It is possible that the tumour removed a year ago was not malignant, and that simple inflammation of the axillary glands occurred, from irritation due to clothing, or some other cause. It is still more likely that the glands were really cancerous, but had become inflamed as well, and that the lotion has allayed the inflammation, and given temporary relief to the patient.

FOUL BEDDING.

SIR.—The friends of a lady suffering from uterine cancer, with profuse discharge, have asked me if there be any danger to any other person who may sleep in the same bed (hair-mattress) after it has been exposed in an empty attic for some months; or if the mattress should be stoved, or destroyed. I have advised the middle course as a precaution, but should be glad of your opinion, and should also feel obliged if any of your correspondents would give me the address of a place in London where bedding, etc., can be disinfected by heat. Mackintosh-sheets were used during the whole of the time that the patient used the bed.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,
W. L. EMMERSON.

Waltham, Melton Mowbray, March 4th, 1884.

** If there be evidence that the discharges sometimes soaked into the mattress when the mackintosh-sheets were removed or displaced for a time, it would certainly be advisable to destroy the mattress. Septic germs hidden in a horsehair-mattress are not destroyed by exposure of the bedding in an empty attic for several months.

J. C. is desirous of being informed if there is any convalescent hospital on the Lancashire or Yorkshire coasts suitable for a patient recovering from inflammation of one lung. His friends will pay for his support.

HURRY AND WORRY.

MR. S. H. FISHER.—The pamphlet with this title, by Mr. T. Pridgin Teale, M.A., is published by C. Goodall of Leeds, and the London publishers are Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.

BLUSHING.

SIR.—Can you inform me whether there is any cure for blushing? Whenever I meet any of my friends, I give a sort of start, and the blood rushes to my face. Is there any remedy for this?—I am, sir, yours truly,
A. B.

A YOUTHFUL MOTHER.

SIR.—I also can give an instance of the above; it is this. On January 13th, 1853, I delivered a girl who was on that day exactly 13 years and 3 months old. She was about six hours "in labour," had a very good time, and passed through the after-time very well; the child, a fair sized and apparently healthy one, however, died at the age of ten weeks.

A married woman, now living in this village, was with me when in attendance upon my patient. I was then living in Norfolk.—Yours very truly,
HENRY P. LEECH, M.R.C.S.E., and L.S.A. Lond.

TREATMENT OF HYDROCELE AFTER UNSUCCESSFUL INJECTION OF TINCTURE OF IODINE.

SIR.—In answer to "Ultima Thule" (JOURNAL, January 26th, p. 203), I would say this. 1. I would try iodine again (or two drachms of fluid extract of ergot left in the tunica vaginalis, which has always proved successful in my hands). 2. Of iodine, I would use one or two drachms of the strongest tincture, and allow it all to remain. 3. The minimum quantity likely to succeed is not less than one drachm. 4. I have never used it heated. 5. I prefer to operate on one side at once. I should keep the patient in bed, and apply cooling lotions, if much inflammation be produced by the iodine; if ergot be used, there will probably be little or no inflammation.—I am, etc.,
GEO. A. HETHERINGTON.
St. John, New Brunswick, February 8th, 1884.

THE SHOERING OF HORSES.

SIR.—I have much pleasure in recommending Mr. G. S. Ryerson to read a little book called *Horses and Roads*, by "Free Lance," a reprint of a series of letters published a year or two ago, in one of the agricultural journals. In it, he will find overwhelming evidence (from practical experience; names, places, and dates specified) that the Charlier system is infinitely superior to any other; and that both tools and ready made tips are to be had from W. H. Stevens, M.R.C.V.S., 9, Park Lane, London, W.

Allow me to add, also, that he will find the line of argument pushed to its logical conclusion, viz., that horses work best without any shoes at all. I read the book myself last month, and have since worked one of my horses without shoes, and am eminently well satisfied with the result, though, of course, three weeks' trial is not long enough for a final verdict.—Yours truly,
A LOVER OF HORSES.

MICROSCOPICAL EXAMINATION OF SPUTUM.

SIR.—In reply to Dr. C. P. Coombs, who wishes to know a more ready method of staining the tubercle bacilli in sputum than that commonly employed, I can recommend the following plan, which is now, I believe, often used by mycologists on account of the great saving of time and trouble effected. A thin and even film of sputum is first dried upon the cover-glass in the usual way, and then floated upon the surface of a small quantity of the magenta and aniline solution previously filtered into a watch-glass. Gentle heat is now applied by means of a spirit-lamp, until vapour rises from the liquid. The cover-glass is now removed and carefully washed in methylated spirit, until as much as possible of the stain is dissolved out, and finally dried. A drop of Farrant's solution, on a glass slide, forms a suitable mount for the specimen. The whole process need not last longer than five minutes; and it will be seen that the use of chrysoidine and nitric acid is entirely dispensed with, a gain that all must appreciate.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,
W. T. LAW, M.D., F.R.C.S.

DANGERS OF FALSE TEETH.

SIR.—On Monday morning, about 1 A.M., I was suddenly called to a single woman, aged about 30, who had woken up out of her sleep, finding that her false teeth had slipped down into the throat. On my arrival, I found her in a considerable state of alarm, but no urgent symptoms of dyspnoea presented themselves. On my passing a probang down the gullet, I could feel some obstruction; and, on introducing the spring-hook end of the probang, succeeded, with some difficulty, in bringing up the offending body, which consisted of four incisor teeth, with gutta-percha plate attached, and a couple of sharp hooks used for securing it to other teeth. With the exception of some soreness of the throat, she recovered without a bad symptom.—I am, etc.,
J. T. P.

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BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

- A System of Obstetric Medicine and Surgery, Theoretical and Clinical, for the Student and Practitioner. By Robert Barnes, M.D., and Fancourt Barnes, M.D. Vol. I. London: Smith, Elder, and Co. 1884.
- A Manual of Physiology for the Use of Junior Students of Medicine. By G. F. Yeo, M.D. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1884.
- A Treatise on Chemical Constitution of the Brain. By J. L. W. Thudichum, M.D. London: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox. 1884.
- A Movable Atlas, showing the Bones and Ligaments of the Human Body. By Professor G. J. Witkowski, M.D. Translated and Edited by A. T. Norton, F.R.C.S.
- The Skeleton and Its Articulations. London: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox.

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