

still hangs about them, they do define well-understood conditions. I am not so sure about these "chronic pelvic women." Admittedly Mr. Bourne had trouble in finding a descriptive title for his address, but he did not have trouble enough. Even the powerful precedent of Dr. Hutchison is not quite convincing: Dr. Hutchison ought to have known better, and besides, there is only one Dr. Hutchison! Also, he had the grace to use a girdle of inverted commas, which might well have been borrowed for the "chronic pelvic woman."

Think of the offspring we may expect. "Chronic coeliac cohorts" will appear, who will eagerly compare notes with "chronic cranial cranks"! The elasticity of our journals is considerable, but will not you, Sir, use your editorial powers to ensure that such terms do not appear without the tailoring suitable for their uncouth nature?—I am, etc.,

Montreal, May 3rd.

H. E. MACDERMOT.

\*\* The question is, does a girdle add grace to naked uncomeliness?—ED., *B.M.J.*

#### THE SACRUM

SIR.—Dr. W. M. Feldman's letter in the *Journal* of May 14th, concerning the sacrum and the legendary conversation between the Emperor Hadrian and Rabbi Joshua ben Chananiah, is of considerable interest. He is doubtless aware that Samuel Butler in *Hudibras*, Part III, Canto ii, refers to this rabbinic theory in characteristic doggerel metre as follows:

"The learned Rabbins of the Jews,  
Write there's a bone, which they call 'Luz,'  
I' the rump of man of such a virtue  
No force in Nature can do hurt to;  
Therefore at the last great day  
All th' other members shall, they say,  
Spring out of this, as from a seed  
All sorts of vegetals proceed;  
From whence the learned sons of art  
'Os sacrum' justly call that part."

—I am, etc.,

London, W.1, May 14th.

A. G. TIMBRELL FISHER.

#### COCA ADDICTION A CENTURY AND MORE AGO

SIR.—If my memory can be trusted, nothing was said of the dangerous qualities of coca when it was first boomed in England some time in the 'seventies of the last century. It was announced that the leaves, either raw or as an infusion, were used in South America to avert fatigue, and preparations such as coca wine were placed on the market and recommended as valuable stimulants. The anaesthetic property of cocaine was announced, I think, about 1885. It was later than this that we began to hear of the danger of cocaine addiction and its ruinous effect on the nervous system, and to most of us this danger appeared to be recently discovered. But evidently the danger had long been known only too well in South America, and should have served as a warning to the rest of the world. In the *National Cyclopaedia* (London, Charles Knight), published in 1848, I recently came upon the article quoted below, which describes a state of things already long prevalent.

"Coca, the dried leaf of *Erythroxylon coca*, is one of those stimulating narcotics which belong to the same class as tobacco and opium, but is more remarkable than either of them in its effects on the human system. . . . The effects of this drug are said to be of the most pernicious nature, exceeding even opium in the destruction of mental and bodily powers. The coca leaf is chewed by the Peruvian, mixed with finely powdered chalk, and brings on a state of apathy and indifference to all surrounding objects. The desire for this drug increases so much with indulgence in it, that a confirmed coca-chewer is said never to have been reclaimed.

"The immoderate addiction of the Peruvians to the use of this drug is such that their forests have long since ceased to be able to supply their wants; and the cultivation of the plant has been carried to a very great extent, not only under the Incas, but beneath the local government of the Spaniards, who seem to have been no more able to resist the temptation of a large revenue from the monopoly of this article than European nations from the consumption of ardent spirits. The cultivation of coca is therefore an important feature in Peruvian husbandry.

"The exciting principle of the coca has not yet been inquired into. . . . The leaves yield an infusion of a green colour, which produces the same terribly stimulating effects on the system as the chewed leaf. The practice of indulgence in this pernicious habit gives rise to numberless diseases: jaundice and derangement of the nervous system, with pains in the head, and such a prostration of strength that the patient speedily loses all appetite. A total inability to sleep ensues, which aggravates the mental depression of the unhappy individual, who, in spite of all his ills, cannot relinquish the use of the herb to which he owes his sufferings, but craves brandy in addition. The appetite becomes quite irregular, sometimes failing altogether, and sometimes assuming quite a wolfish voracity, especially for animal food. Thus do years of misery drag on, succeeded at length by a painful death."

Reference is given to Pöppig, *Reise in Chile, etc.*, vol. ii; Hooker, *Companion to Botanical Mag.*, i and ii.—I am, etc.,

Shepton Mallet.

F. J. ALLEN.

## Obituary

### ANDREW ELLIS WYNTER, M.D.

Dr. Andrew Ellis Wynter, whose death occurred on May 7th, at the age of 70, was the second surviving son of Dr. Andrew Wynter, Editor of the *British Medical Journal* from 1855 to 1860. Like his father, his interest in medicine was seriously rivalled by a wider outlook on life. After a distinguished career at Epsom College and St. Bartholomew's Hospital, at both of which he obtained scholarships, showing the best of his nature by interest in collateral activities, he practised for about five years at Beckenham. The routine and limitations were, however, distasteful, and when the South African war broke out he joined the expedition and served through the greater part, being present at Modder River, before being invalided home in the summer of 1900. Once imbued with the fascination of travel, he visited by turns all the British Dominions, developing a passionate enthusiasm for the Empire, which dominated his after life. When the war between the U.S.A. and Spain occurred he joined the American Forces as surgeon, and served in Cuba. There were more medical than surgical casualties, and he was himself invalided with what was called "typhomalaria," which entailed three months' hospital treatment. The subsequent years were occupied in further travelling, including an expedition in Central Africa at the time that country was being opened up to British occupation. In 1914, being over age for active service, he employed himself in recruiting, and, later, served on board merchant ships, running the gauntlet of submarines during their intensive activity.

For the last twelve years Dr. Wynter took an active part in social work, subscribing regularly to the many institutions in aid of the youth of the present generation—dockland settlements, orphanages, and emigration movements—besides numerous public institutions, such as the Colonial Institute, English Speaking Union, and Freemasonry. His ideals were socialistic, but of the kind that gives rather than takes; living frugally on a small income, he devoted two-thirds to public service. Such men are rare, widely appreciated, and can ill be spared.