

My patient had other symptoms indicative of a neurotic disposition. He suffered from depression, easily disturbed sleep, claustrophobia, fear of the dark, hay fever, and nervousness when riding on a bicycle or in a motor car. The vasomotor disturbances so commonly associated with these symptoms were manifest in his cold, clammy, bluish-red hands. Occasionally, even in summer, and especially at meal-times, his fingers and toes would become white and "dead." Several years later, when investigating the psychogenesis of patchy erythema of the face and neck, I asked this same patient to come for a further examination. His pupils were then normal, but he had a pale face and very red ears and neck. With the psychological significance of "getting it in the neck" in my mind, I used a stock inquiry and asked, "How do you react to anything rather tight, like a scarf or collar, round your neck?" He replied, "I awake at night fairly often with a sensation as if someone had a piece of rope round my neck and was gradually tightening it. When it becomes really tight I awake in a great fright and call out. My parents often hear the cry." He was indeed "getting it in the neck" in his dream life, and I was not surprised when, in answer to my next question, he said, "I never read detective tales; they are not even allowed in the house." If such a man were ever in the plight of an unconvicted prisoner he would not be amongst those whose pupillary inequality adjusts itself in a single night.

The very word "pupil"—from *pupilla*, a ward or minor—arouses curiosity as to why the opening in the iris was thus named, and the literal meaning of belladonna—beautiful lady—shows the strange emotional value attached to larger pupils, even when artificially induced. Can any useful conclusions as regards guilt be drawn from emotionally determined inequality of the pupils? I cannot say as far as conscious guilt goes. A tough lag might not bat an eyelid or dilate a pupil anyhow; it might be different if a conscience-stricken elder of the kirk were suddenly called upon to declare, in a police court, whether he had really been his brother's keeper or not. My patient, I feel sure, was a thoroughly worthy citizen, but one equally worthy once said, when watching a felon being taken to execution, "There, but for the grace of God. . . ."—I am, etc.,

Portsmouth, April 3.

W. S. INMAN.

Abuse of Ephedrine

SIR.—In Professor J. H. Gaddum's interesting article on ephedrine, appearing in the *Journal* of April 2 (p. 713), I notice that he states that this drug is "having rather a vogue for local application to the nose, where it produces vasoconstriction and dries up secretions."

For many years I have regarded this drug as being one of the most dangerous decorations of the average bathroom shelf. It appears in various forms of gaudy bottle, complete with nasal dropper, and is advised in all forms of nasal congestion. The contents give temporary relief in acute coryzal congestion. Such relief is sought by the patient repeatedly, and secretions are kept dried up. Inflammation of the antrum is the usual end-result. This may certainly be mild and transitory, but frequently is more serious, the degree of damage being to a certain extent proportionate to the number of applications of the contents of the dropper.

I consider that it is the ephedrine content of the oily emulsions which should be banned from the treatment of acute coryza. I speak from the observation of innumerable cases seen in general practice, and I should be interested to hear whether it receives the confirmation of other practitioners.—I am, etc.,

Maidenhead, April 5. R. R. FOOTE, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Food Supplies and Defence

SIR,—You kindly published in your issue of May 23, 1936 (p. 1079), a letter of mine indicating the possibility and urging the necessity for this country of self-sufficiency in essential foods. True there has been some movement in this direction, for which we may be thankful to the Government; but it has been perilously slow, and now, with a situation abroad more menacing to this country than any since 1918, it is manifest there is widespread apprehension of defeat through starvation in the event of war. In my opinion it is unwise to count on assistance from beyond the confines of the British Empire, if not, indeed, from beyond the shores of Britain. Armaments alone are inadequate. However gigantic they may be panic as to the inadequacy of our food supplies may still be inevitable unless we hasten to assure our home supplies.

I invite a reference to the report of the Committee on Nutrition, issued by the British Medical Association in November, 1933. Page 12 contains: "Table II.—Daily Requirements of an Adult Male in Calories, Protein, Fat, and Carbohydrates." These are:

First-class protein	...	...	...	50 grammes
Second-class protein	...	...	...	50 "
Fat	...	...	...	100 "
Carbohydrate	...	...	...	500 "

The second-class protein and some of the fat can be supplied by cereals, as the table shows. If only by reason of the certain lack of shipping in the event of war, surely it has been folly not to produce the carbohydrates from the home soil, as that soil can produce all we need. Every million pounds spent on cereal production will obviate the spending of ten times as much on armaments. Page 24 of the B.M.A. report gives: "Diet No. 3.—Adult Ration. No Meat or Fish," and it is stated: "This diet has been devised to enable those persons who object to eating flesh foods to obtain a diet which is satisfactory as regards its constituents. The first-class protein in this diet is derived from milk and cheese. The cost is approximately the same as that of the preceding diet." As an acre of land when used for dairy farming produces at least twice as much first-class protein and fats as when producing meat, it is astonishing that at the present juncture the Government should encourage meat production, especially as, without such encouragement, there would still be ample meat when the land is producing essential foods.

The Government appears to be averse to formulating and enforcing an agricultural policy that will assure us against starvation in war time. I venture to submit this policy must be one that is in normal operation in time of peace, and that assures essential foods with the minimum of labour cost, thus setting free the maximum number for active service in the event of war. Maybe it is but envisaging this policy from another aspect to say a national policy should aim at the maximum population that can be supported in health on the produce of the home soil. This is the policy of Germany and Italy. It is, indeed, the policy on which the sages of all religions have been agreed. It has no place for our so-called high standard of living, advocates of which are generally also advocates of a restricted population. Britain can support in health double its present population on the produce of its own soil: had it that population at the present moment we should be living free from all apprehension of war!—I am, etc.,

London, W.14, April 5.

E. BATCHELOR, I.C.S.(ret.).