

AT the annual dinner of the Incorporated Vermin Repression Society, with Dr. Nathan Raw, M.P., in the chair, Colonel S. J. M. Auld suggested that the administration of the Rats and Mice Destruction Act (1919) should be taken out of the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture and handed over to the Ministry of Health. They did not ask for the prosecution of the small householder, who was really a sufferer from the overflow of vermin from congested centres, but they wanted to get at the headquarters of the rat, which was in wharves, warehouses, ships, and agricultural buildings, and they called for more prosecutions of the chief offenders. Mr. Alfred E. Moore (honorary director of the society) said that there had been few statutes so badly administered as the Rats Act; the Ministry of Agriculture was no friend of the Act, and the four men responsible for enforcing it upon the local authorities had been dismissed. "Rat weeks" in London were useless, because the rat simply used the sewers as highways to seek temporary sanctuary where they were not being persecuted. Mr. Mark Hovell, Dr. A. Balfour, and Professor F. Hobday were among others who spoke at the dinner.

THE Umberto I Prize of the Rizzoli Orthopaedic Institute, Bologna, has been awarded to Dr. Murk Jansen of Leyden in recognition of the high quality of the work submitted by him to the adjudicators.

Letters, Notes, and Answers.

As, owing to printing difficulties, the JOURNAL must be sent to press earlier than hitherto, it is essential that communications intended for the current issue should be received by the first post on Tuesday, and lengthy documents on Monday.

THE postal address of the BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION and BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL is 429, Strand, London, W.C.2. The telegraphic addresses are:

1. EDITOR of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, *Aitology, Westrand, London*; telephone, 2630, Gerrard.

2. FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND BUSINESS MANAGER (Advertisements, etc.), *Articulate, Westrand, London*; telephone, 2630, Gerrard.

3. MEDICAL SECRETARY, *Medisecra, Westrand, London*; telephone, 2630, Gerrard. The address of the Irish Office of the British Medical Association is 16, South Frederick Street, Dublin (telegrams: *Bacillus, Dublin*; telephone, 4737, Dublin), and of the Scottish Office, 6, Rutland Square, Edinburgh (telegrams: *Associate, Edinburgh*; telephone, 4361, Central).

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

"W. H. B." asks for advice in the treatment of an obstinate case of pityriasis rubra.

INCOME TAX.

"CUSTOMS" is in the service of a borough council. For 1919-20 he was first assessed on the salary payable for that year; later an additional assessment was made on a bonus which was in force for a portion of 1919-20, and now a further charge is raised to cancel certain allowances which ceased to apply at the higher amount of income.

** Our correspondent not unnaturally resents such repeated applications, but unfortunately he has no remedy. The Revenue authorities are entitled to correct an assessment within three years, and if his total income for 1919-20 exceeded £800 the cancellation of the allowances is legally justified. If that total exceeded £800 but not £1,000 he is entitled to an allowance for each child—in excess of two—who is a proper subject of claim—for example, if the allowance for three children has been cancelled £40 for one child should be restored.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

HERPES AND VARICELLA.

DR. H. B. WILLOUGHBY SMITH (Gainsborough) writes: I have recently had an interesting instance of the association or possible connexion between herpes zoster and varicella. Early in January this year I was called to see a boy, aged 7 years, who had a very well-marked eruption of herpes zoster, covering practically the whole of the area supplied by the third dorsal on the left side. Exactly twenty-one days later this boy's young sister developed a typical varicella eruption over the whole body. There are no cases of varicella in the vicinity, and neither child had been exposed to any possible outside infection. The connexion appears too close to be mere coincidence.

DR. ST. GEORGE B. DELISLE GRAY (Medical Officer, British Hospital, Oporto) writes: It may be of interest to add the following two cases to the many already published of the association of herpes with varicella. There was an epidemic of chicken-pox last year in Oporto. Towards the beginning of this epidemic I was called in to see a little girl who had typical varicella. On making enquiries as to contacts and other members of the

family the mother volunteered the statement that about a fortnight before she had had similar spots "on one side of the body which I thought was shingles." I have no doubt that she was right in her diagnosis. The other two child members of the family had chicken-pox in due course. About the same time I was consulted by the head of a school, who had a severe attack of herpes. A fortnight later there was an outbreak of chicken-pox at the school among the boarders at his house.

TUBERCULIN IN ASTHMA.

DR. F. E. GUNTER, D.S.O. (London, W.) writes: I was much interested in Dr. J. L. Rentoul's letter of February 4th, p. 212, on the use of tuberculin in asthma. He states that some cases do well but not all. The reason for this probably is that by no means all cases of asthma are of tuberculous origin. I test my cases with T.A.F. after the method advocated by Dr. Camac Wilkinson. If they react then I treat them either with P.T.O., which is excellent, or some other tuberculin preparation. If there is no reaction it is wiser to look for another cause of the asthma, such as some food idiosyncrasy.

DEPILATORIES.

A CORRESPONDENT, who has a lady patient with marked growth of hair on the chin, writes to inquire about an efficient depilatory. We published in 1920 (August 7th, August 21st, and September 11th) some notes upon this subject, which may be summarized as follows: The most satisfactory method of removal from the upper lip and chin is apparently by electrolysis; this, however, has the drawback that a slight degree of scarring is probable, while a certain percentage of hairs usually return at a later date. A depilatory powder which has been recommended consists of equal parts of barium sulphide and zinc oxide; this is made into a thick paste with water immediately before using. The directions are to rub the paste upon the lip or chin, and leave it on until it causes a slight smarting (one or two minutes); it is then washed off with water and some soothing ointment applied; the hair can be rubbed off in about ten minutes. A second, or even a third, application may be necessary, and it is better to go slowly than to risk wounding the skin by leaving the paste on too long the first time. Another correspondent wrote asking if there was any real objection to shaving with a safety razor. He had recommended this to two lady patients, with complete satisfaction to them as regards the result; of course it had to be done at fairly frequent intervals.

Our correspondent, therefore, can have his choice of treatments, but, as depilatory powders are really only a form of shaving, it is difficult to see any objection to the use of a safety razor, and even the best depilatories are apt to cause some irritation of the skin.

PELIOSIS RHEUMATICA.

A Correction.

DR. F. G. CLEW, C.M.G. (Constantinople), writes: A small but unfortunate misprint occurs in my letter on this subject, which you were good enough to publish in your issue of January 28th (p. 168), and I shall be much obliged if you will allow me to make the following correction. The penultimate sentence should read: "Unfortunately, neither the patient nor his friends had realized the gravity of the condition and sent for me during the twenty-six or twenty-seven hours. . . ." My object was to state that patient and friends did not realize the gravity of the condition, and did not send for me, whereas the letter as printed exactly reverses the latter statement.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, and 39 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 34 and 35.

THE Home Secretary proposes to appoint a physician as medical referee under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, for County Court Circuit No. 32 (Norfolk). Applications to the Private Secretary, Home Office, by February 21st.

THE following vacant appointments of certifying factory surgeons are announced: Cheltenham (Gloucester), Pollokshaws (Lanark), Topsham (Devon), Wool (Dorset).

SCALE OF CHARGES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL.

	£	s.	d.
Six lines and under	0 9 0
Each additional line	0 1 6
Whole single column (three columns to page)	7 10 0
Half single column	3 15 0
Half page	10 0 0
Whole page	20 0 0

An average line contains six words.

All remittances by Post Office Orders must be made payable to the British Medical Association at the General Post Office, London. No responsibility will be accepted for any such remittance not so safeguarded.

Advertisements should be delivered, addressed to the Manager, 429, Strand, London, not later than the first post on Tuesday morning preceding publication, and, if not paid for at the time, should be accompanied by a reference.

NOTE.—It is against the rules of the Post Office to receive *poste restante* letters addressed either in initials or numbers.