

Locating Foreign Bodies in the Limbs

SIR,—I believe the method of locating foreign bodies in the limbs so well described by Dr. Leonard Ley (May 11, p. 771) was introduced by Dr. Shenton of Guy's Hospital. He was good enough to show me the method at the beginning of the last war, and advised me to practise it by hiding a coin in a lump of dough. After a little experience it was easy to locate the coin exactly. Later on in the war I found the method very useful when I was in charge of the x-ray department of the Military Hospital, Plymouth.—I am, etc.,

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May 13.

Medico-Legal

DAMAGES FOR NEUROSIS

Those who desire to see the growth of mutual understanding between medical men and lawyers will rejoice at a judgment of the Court of Appeal in a recent running-down case.¹ His Majesty's judges may still now and again tend to interpret too strictly the rules in *Macnaghten's* case, but Lord Justice Slesser gave ample proof that he understands the nature of neurosis.

A young girl was injured in a taxicab accident and claimed damages, among other things, for neurosis. When the action was tried before Mr. Justice Stable the judge said she impressed him as having one major preoccupation in life—how ill she was. He was satisfied that if she could only persuade herself that she could do so, she could be working and living a perfectly normal life in a couple of months. If she had made a resolute effort, or if someone had made it for her, to get back to the normal active life of a normal active young woman, and if the circumstances were such that she was compelled to do so, there was nothing in the world to prevent it. Dealing with the quantum of damages, he thought she had only persuaded herself that every time she did something a little energetic it hurt her, but when she did something else—because the pain was really in her mind—it stopped aching. He thought she had derived a certain amount of enjoyment from contemplating the peculiar sort of existence which she had elected to live. He awarded £300 damages for the neurosis, and she appealed, saying that this amount was insufficient. The Court of Appeal ordered a new trial on the ground that the learned judge, having come to the conclusion that the condition was neurotic, allowed considerations to enter his mind which must have affected his estimation of the damage. Lord Justice Slesser dealt effectively with the argument of counsel that, the pain being neurotic and not organic, if the girl did not attempt to do the things which gave her pain or indulge in that particular kind of activity, then she would not suffer pain. That, he said, was exactly the dilemma with which counsel was faced. If the plaintiff could avoid the pain by not doing certain normal things, then she had been damaged because she could not do them. Conversely, if she attempted them and felt pain, then there was no basis for saying that the pain did not cause much suffering. Obviously, if the true conclusion was that she had suffered much pain for three years, she would be entitled to more damages than she would be on the view that she had suffered very little pain. The matter could not be determined conclusively by merely saying that she was neurotic. That she could not make the effort to live normally was part of the illness. In other words, the learned Lord Justice exploded the view that "neurotic" is a synonym for "unreal."

¹ *Liffen v. Watson*. 1940 2 All E.R., 213.

CARDIAC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The annual meeting of the above society was held in the Cardiac Department of the London Hospital on May 9, under the chairmanship of Dr. John Parkinson. After a debate on fitness for war service, a committee was appointed to investigate and make recommendations on the cardiac examination of recruits.

In the afternoon there was a demonstration of cases, x-ray films, and electrocardiograms. This was followed by a discussion on the effort syndrome, the problem being considered as it is now presenting itself in military service. Means of obviating incapacity from this cause were examined, as well as its treatment. The original communications in the programme, as arranged by the honorary secretary, Dr. Maurice Campbell, concerned auricular septal defect, special forms of infective endocarditis, and surgical aspects of hypertension with unilateral renal damage.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

In Convocation on May 14 a proposal to confer the honorary degree of D.Sc. on Dr. Mariano Rafael Castex of Buenos Aires was approved. It will be conferred by delegates elected by the Chancellor, Lord Halifax. Dr. Castex has been for more than twenty-five years professor of clinical medicine at the University of Buenos Aires, and was for a time Rector.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The Vice-Chancellor gives notice that a Congregation will be held on Saturday, August 3, at 2 p.m. Degrees may be conferred at this Congregation (1) upon supplicants for medical and surgical degrees who are qualified to proceed to degrees on that day under *Ordinances*, p. 3, section 9; (2) under Grace 8 of May 10, upon supplicants for degrees whose qualifications therefor include the emergency allowance of one or more terms or of an examination.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

LONDON (ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL) SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FOR WOMEN

The following postgraduate scholarships will be awarded for the session 1940-1: (a) A. M. Bird Scholarship. £200 for one year tenable from August 1, 1940, to enable a medical graduate to obtain general experience in pathology; (b) Mabel Webb and A. M. Bird Research Scholarship. £200 a year for assistance in carrying on research. Further particulars and forms of application can be obtained from the warden and secretary of the Medical School, Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, W.C.1. Applications must be received by June 10.

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

The following appointments have been made to the staff of the Department of Surgery in consequence of the impending retirement of Professor E. R. Flint, F.R.C.S., from the chair of surgery and the directorship of surgical research: Professor P. J. Moir, F.R.C.S., who at present holds the chair of clinical surgery, becomes professor of surgery, and Mr. H. W. Symons, F.R.C.S., succeeds him as professor of clinical surgery. Mr. L. N. Pyrah, F.R.C.S., is appointed director of surgical research.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH

At a meeting of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh held on May 14, with Dr. H. M. Traquair, president, in the chair, the following, having passed the requisite examinations, were admitted Fellows:

J. C. Andreas, H. Barat, L. L. Bernstein, B. B. Bhatia, W. A. Coe, R. J. Crompton, B. J. D. Dunne, K. J. Eager, J. R. Frank, D. F. Freebody, J. G. O. Hamman, B. A. Jackson, J. O. Kelly, A. B. Morrison, K. S. Mullard, G. D. Oliver, G. I. M. Ross, L. M. Rouillard, G. Singh-Janda, E. Thomas, L. R. Williams, R. W. Wise, J. D. Younghusband.