

**Hubble-bubble Smoking**

SIR,—In the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent "dry" or "wet" tobacco is used in the hookah. The tobacco is lit by charcoal flakes. Though the smoke filters through the water, yet the outpipe is shared by others. This is like sharing your pipe, and is not hygienic. If cheap cigarettes have reached the deep recesses of the Himalayas, it is because the hookah is cumbersome to carry. Imagine people going about in the streets with 3 ft. high smoke-filter pumps!—I am, etc.,

Prestwich Hospital,  
Near Manchester.

HAROLD THAKURDAS.

**Staphylococcal Septicaemia**

SIR,—Mr. J. R. De Andrade and Dr. C. R. Tribe (June 2, p. 1516) quote me as noting "that staphylococcal septicaemia may cause renal failure due to cortical necrosis." This is somewhat misleading, in that whereas I found three examples of complete cortical necrosis in a series of 40 fatal cases of staphylococcal septicaemia, there were 14 additional cases of acute tubular necrosis. Glomerulonephritis was also a more frequent finding than cortical necrosis.<sup>1 2</sup>—I am, etc.,

Bridgend, Glam.

D. E. B. POWELL.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Powell, D. E. B., *Brit. med. J.*, 1961, 2, 336.
- <sup>2</sup> ——— *J. Path. Bact.*, 1961, 82, 141.

**Pope and Hutchison**

SIR,—The quotation attributed by Mr. Nigel H. Harris to Sir Robert Hutchison (May 26, p. 1440):

"Be not the first by whom the new are tried  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside"

was written by Alexander Pope in "An Essay on Criticism" written in 1709 while Pope was yet 20, and published in 1711. He was writing on the use of words, comparing fashions in language with those of dress, and further reminds us that:

"Words are like leaves; and where they most abound  
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found";

another typical canon frequently violated in the poem itself which abounds with both words and sense, new and old.—I am, etc.,

Medical School,  
University of Bristol.

C. PENNOCK.

**Marks on Hospital Clothing**

SIR,—We are, it is often said, bedevilled by committees, and a recent example calls for comment.

I was called the other night to assist the receiving-room officer in the disposal of a man who had been brought in by the police. He was grossly retarded and obviously schizophrenic. No information could be obtained from him or from the police. However, his clothing was clearly marked with his name, and on some articles there was a large embroidered pattern consisting of a C 1½ in. (37.7 mm.) across with a very small N by the top limb and a small H at the lower limb.

This suggested a mental hospital beginning with the letter C, and I spent a considerable time on the telephone consulting with numerous hospitals in the London area

to no avail. A very helpful young lady at the L.C.C. ambulance exchange suggested that perhaps the N might be the initial of the hospital and with this I was successful.

I was amazed, however, to discover that the letters stood for N—— Hospital COMMITTEE. As patients tend to wander away from mental hospitals so frequently and casualty officers spend much time returning them, it would be helpful if efforts to mark clothing were informative and not positively misleading.—I am, etc.,

The London Hospital,  
London E.1.

G. L. BOLT.

**Claims for Readership**

SIR,—I find it as difficult to understand why the Editor of the *British Medical Journal* should have published Mr. Alan H. Hunt's letter about *Pulse* (May 19, p. 1418) as to understand why Mr. Hunt should have written it.

The answer to Mr. Hunt's question is surely contained in his own letter. *Pulse* is circulated free of charge to members of the medical profession, its cost of production and distribution being borne by its advertisement revenue. It is, I believe, true to say that the *British Medical Journal* is largely, though not wholly, financed in the same way. A member of the British Medical Association who, having paid his membership fee, receives the *British Medical Journal* can as easily request his name to be removed from the circulation list as Mr. Hunt can do in the case of *Pulse*.

If the *British Medical Journal* published the fact that between 80 and 90% of medical practitioners read their journal, would this imply that all readers supported the views expressed in its pages? I can assure the Editor of the *British Medical Journal*, as well as Mr. Hunt, that the correspondence we receive from members of the medical profession indicates that both *Pulse* and the *British Medical Journal* have their critics, though it has been the policy of our journal not to publish critical references to other journals or papers read by doctors.

I sincerely hope that we shall be able to maintain a non-partisan approach in *Pulse* as there are more important subjects for our limited space than letters gratuitously attacking other journals. In passing, I cannot help wondering why Mr. Hunt did not address his letter to *Pulse* rather than to another journal.

However, through the courtesy of your correspondence column, we have learned Mr. Hunt's views and have accordingly removed his name from our circulation list.—I am, etc.,

London W.C.2.

ALAN HUET OWEN,  
Managing Director,  
Professional Projects Ltd.

**London Dock Labour**

SIR,—I am engaged in collecting material for a book on London dock labour. It seems to be that there is a good chance that some of the doctors who practised either in the East End or on the Surrey side near the docks and wharves might possibly have kept diaries which are in the hands of their descendants and which might throw considerable light on the conditions of the last century. The period in which I am interested is 1800 to 1908 approximately.

In particular there was a Dr. Moir who practised in West Ham and appears to have had considerable