

LETTERS, NOTES, AND ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE CURRENT WEEK'S JOURNAL SHOULD REACH THE OFFICE NOT LATER THAN MIDDAY POST ON WEDNESDAY. TELEGRAMS CAN BE RECEIVED ON THURSDAY MORNING.

COMMUNICATIONS respecting Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, 429, Strand, W.C., London; those concerning business matters, non-delivery of the JOURNAL, etc., should be addressed to the Manager, at the Office, 429, Strand, W.C., London.

IN order to avoid delay, it is particularly requested that all letters on the editorial business of the JOURNAL be addressed to the Editor at the Office of the JOURNAL and not to his private house.

AUTHORS desiring reprints of their articles published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL are requested to communicate beforehand with the Manager, 429, Strand, W.C.

CORRESPONDENTS who wish notice to be taken of their communications should authenticate them with their names—of course not necessarily for publication.

CORRESPONDENTS not answered are requested to look to the Notices to Correspondents of the following week.

MANUSCRIPTS FORWARDED TO THE OFFICE OF THIS JOURNAL CANNOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE RETURNED.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.—We shall be much obliged to Medical Officers of Health if they will, on forwarding their Annual and other Reports, favour us with duplicate copies.

Queries, answers, and communications relating to subjects to which special departments of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL are devoted will be found under their respective headings.

QUERIES.

DR. VALENTINE MATTHEWS, Surgeon-Captain V.M.S.C. (22, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, S.W.), writes to ask all old King's men holding commissions in the Volunteers to kindly send their names, rank, etc., to him at the above address.

LOSS OF TASTE.

VARIOLA asks for advice in the treatment of a robust man, aged 52, without any trace of hysteria, who, since an attack of influenza three years ago, cannot taste certain foods—fish, potatoes, tea, and whisky—while other articles—meat and eggs—have a "sulphury" taste. Smell is preserved, and the ordinary tests for bitters, acids, and salines appear to show that tactile sensation and taste are preserved in both the anterior and posterior portions of the tongue.

THE MARRIAGE OF SYPHILITICS.

DR. BURNSIDE FOSTER (Lowry Buildings, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.), writes: For the purpose of securing reliable statistics on the subject of the marriage of syphilitics, I desire to enlist the assistance of those of your readers who have had experience which will be of value in determining the period when this disease ceases to be communicable and inheritable. I shall therefore esteem it a great favour on the part of any physician who will send me answers to the following questions, and due credit will be given in a future publication to those who desire to aid me in this work:

1. What is the latest period from the date of the initial lesion that you have known the disease to be communicated by a patient who has been from the first under your observation?

2. What is the latest period from the date of the initial lesion that you have known: (a) a syphilitic man, or (b) a syphilitic woman to become the parent of a syphilitic child?

3. Have you ever known syphilis to be either communicated or handed down at a later period than four years from the date of initial lesion by an individual who has been constantly under your observation during that time?

In answering these questions I should like a brief but complete history of each case, and an account of the treatment that has been pursued. I hope by this means to obtain the experience of a large number of observers, and to reach a fairly reliable conclusion as to the time when we may safely permit our syphilitic patients to marry.

INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT.

M.D. writes: I have lately been before the Special Commissioners of Income Tax. To my great surprise, they told me they they would only allow me, for the working of a very responsible and troublesome practice: £80 for a horse, man, etc.; £20 for sundries; £20 for consulting rooms, etc., which I occupy, in a house which, with rates, etc., costs me £84 a year, exclusive of £13 a year for stable. The allowances I claimed were: £105 for horse and man, £3 extra for trains and cars, £20 for wear and tear, £40 for consulting rooms, and £15 for a substitute. I must provide my substitute on all occasions except during illness. I would be glad to know if these are the usual just and legitimate claims. If so, I will be thankful if you will inform me what steps I should take to obtain a fair settlement of an important public question. When I pointed out that the printed forms allowed a claim of two-thirds of the rent for an office, they remarked that this applied to business premises only.

. There is, we fear, no appeal against the decision given on the present occasion. We do not understand, however, how the Commissioners can equitably say to a medical practitioner who has spent £100 on stable expenses, "We will only allow £80." The point appears to be well worthy of consideration and discussion with a view to future action.

ANSWERS.

G. S. should consult a general practitioner in his neighbourhood, who will advise him as to the necessity of consulting a surgical specialist. We cannot recommend individual practitioners.

QUERIST.—Our correspondent will find the information he requires as to the deductions medical men are allowed in estimating their net income for the purpose of assessment either in *Income Tax: How to Get it Refunded*, ninth edition, or in the special balancesheets for professional men. These, as well as the book, are published by the Income Tax Repayment Agency, whose new offices are 6, Chichester Road, Paddington.

VENEREAL DISEASE IN DOGS.

C. E. S. F.—There is no reason to believe that dogs can suffer from syphilis. If material taken from the syphilitic lesion of the human subject be inoculated into the skin of the dog, a comparatively slight lesion follows, which quickly and spontaneously heals, leaving no appreciable local or constitutional effect on the dog. We know of no circumstances which suggest that syphilis is a venereal disease natural to the dog. With regard to the dose of mercury for a dog, about 1 grain of hydrargyrum c. creta for every 10 pounds of body weight may be given daily to dogs for weeks, usually without harm, but it is necessary to observe as to idiosyncrasy as in man. In the particular case described the clinical experience of a veterinary surgeon may prove of some value.

THE HAMILTON ASSOCIATION FOR PROVIDING TRAINED MALE NURSES.

THIS Association employs men who have served as orderlies in military or naval hospitals, who have formed part of the Army Service Corps, or men who have had training in a civil hospital; of these latter there are very few. We learn from the ninth annual report that the earnings have increased by about £800 this last year, showing that the demand for the male nurse is not on the wane. The address of the Association is 57, Park Street, Grosvenor Square, W.

TREATMENT OF SWEATING FEET.

H. L. D. recommends the sufferer to wring his socks daily nearly dry out of a 1 to 40 solution of carbolic acid, and so wear them for a few days.

MR. GEORGE FISHER, M.R.C.S.E. (Guildford) recommends that the feet should be washed and carefully dried, and well rubbed each night with castor oil. Wool socks should be worn.

S. W. S. sends the following suggestions, which he has collected: Sweating feet, chromic acid, 5 per cent. solution. Stinking feet, bromo-iodine, iodo, aristol, liq. plumb. diacet., pilocarpin, and boracic acid or borax. As tight-fitting cuffs cause wrists to perspire, presumably tight-fitting boots would do so too. They should be roomy and airy, and deep enough for the toes. I have no doubt, he adds, the ancients were wise in warm climates in using sandals.

MR. EDGAR DUKE (St. Leonards) writes in reply to "A. M. S.": From extracts from the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, which I have kept, I quote the following suggestions: 1. Wear low shoes, and dust the feet over twice a day with iodo. 2. Wash the feet at night with very hot water, put on white cotton socks, and immerse the feet thus covered in methylated spirit poured into a basin; wear the socks all night, they will soon dry in bed. During the evening wear cotton socks and common felt slippers, and keep the feet constantly saturated with spirit. In a week the cure (the writer states) will be complete. The best ventilated shoes are made of stout canvas. 3. A lead-spirit lotion is recommended for use night and morning, after washing with soap and water and drying. Plumbi acetatis 5j; sp. vin. menth. 3ij; acet. destill. 5j; aq. ad 5xvi.

NOTES, LETTERS, Etc.

THE HISTOLOGY OF THE VACCINE VESICLE.

ERRATUM.—An obvious printer's error occurs in the description by Mr. Stanley Kent of the bacillus found in vaccine lymph, in the JOURNAL of September 22nd, page 633. The length of this organ should have been given as 1 μ .

A VACCINATION INSTRUMENT.

H. L. D. writes: I have been in the habit of using common pins for this purpose for some years. The pins are made aseptic by heating to redness, and when cold are used by dipping the pin into the lymph and working it into the skin, after which the pin is thrown away; 360 pins cost one penny.

THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL COMMISSION ON THE PROVINCIAL WORKHOUSE INFIRMARIES—NOTES OF PROGRESS.

THE workhouse critics on the staff of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL have been taken to task, says the *Local Government Journal*, by no less a personage than Mr. Kennedy, the Local Government Board Inspector. Speaking at Wakefield on Wednesday, September 19th, to the guardians, Mr. Kennedy indignantly denied the allegations of our contemporary with respect to Wakefield, and submitted that the Commissioner appointed was an incompetent person. It is not for us to say *aye* or *no* to Mr. Kennedy's remarks, but we do not lose sight of the fact that in nearly every workhouse infirmary which had been reported upon by our contemporary, changes for the better have been made.

HOSPITALS OF THE STATE.

IN the evidence given at the inquest relative to the death of William Lavers, aged 59, a pauper, who committed suicide in the Convalescent Ward of the Plymouth Workhouse by cutting his throat with a table knife, the nurse stated that she was called to see this man at 1.30 A.M., when he was bleeding, and by her own admission she did not summon medical or any other aid, and the man died. Such conduct on the part of the nurse stamps her at once as being quite unfit for the profession.