

LETTERS, NOTES, AND ANSWERS TO
CORRESPONDENTS.

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.

C. G. asks whether there is any place in England where he could carry out a cure for fever and congestion of the liver, instead of having to go to Homburg, which he is not desirous of doing if it can be avoided.

CLANRYE asks for information as to the value of Droitwich brine baths in rheumatic arthritis. He also wishes to procure a list of lodgings suitable for an assistant school mistress.

SCIATICA.

A MEMBER who has suffered from sciatica for eight months and has tried almost all the recognized forms of treatment including drugs, counter-irritants, a visit to Buxton, and recently the operation of stretching and puncture of the nerve, but still experiences almost constant pain, would be grateful for advice.

DIPHTHERIA ANTITOXIN.

DR. F. G. CROOKSHANK (Medical Superintendent, Isolation Hospital, South Worple Way, Mortlake, S.W.) writes: I should be glad to know if any superintendents of isolation hospitals, or others who have large experience of diphtheria, have noticed of late less favourable or anomalous results in cases treated with antitoxin derived from one of the two or three best recognized sources. I ask this because during the last six months I have had very diverse results with cases treated with one or other of the best-known serums, and these results, though confined to a series of some fifty cases only, have seemed to me too striking to be due to coincidence or accidental circumstances.

ANSWERS.

VEGETARIAN RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

JOSMAR.—We have tried in many likely quarters to get information as to the effect on the health of members of such religious orders or communities as practise abstention from meat, eggs, milk, and cheese, but with little result. We are informed that it is unlikely that any trustworthy statistics on the subject are procurable. The general impression, however, seems to be that the health does not suffer appreciably. Certainly a considerable number of instances of remarkable longevity are cited. Perhaps our correspondent might find what he wants in *Der Orden der Trappisten und die vegetarische Lebensweise*, by Hofrat Dr. Suchier, published by Otto Gmelin, of Munich. A second edition has recently appeared.

LETTERS, NOTES, Etc.

PRESENTATION TO ST. ANNE'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

The Council of Epsom College is about to present a girl to the Schools of St. Anne's Society. A candidate must be between the ages of 7 and 12, and must be the orphan daughter of a duly qualified medical man who has been for not less than five years in independent practice in England or Wales. Forms of application can be obtained at the office of Epsom College, 37, Soho Square, London, W.

"ALL THAT GLISTERS IS NOT GOLD."

A MEMBER of the medical profession in this country who, one day this week, received a visit from a glib gentleman calling himself an American doctor, intends to keep the watch left with him as security for a small loan, as a reminder of the truth of the proverb.

MILK SUPPLY OF CRECHES.

L. L. THOMSON, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., writes from Lyons: In reading your article on crèches, which discusses some of the problems which those who have the direction and control of such have to contend with, it appears to me that an account of the management of the milk supply to crèches in Lyons might be of some interest.

I may say that the Municipal Institute for the sterilization of milk is under the direct supervision of Dr. Roux, the well-known hygienist, who is also Professor of Hygiene at the University of Lyons.

I visited the Institute with him, and he gave me a lengthened description of the various phases through which the undertaking had passed. First of all, they bought the milk and sterilized it, but had to give this method up as the milk supplied was found to be adulterated.

The Institute occupies the centre of the finest park in Lyons—the Parc de la Tête d'Or; its position is essentially good, especially as the park is situated on the outskirts of the city.

The building is long, low, one-storied, and built of stone. At one end is the cowshed, built on the latest principles as regards ventilation. There are only twenty cows, but there is room for as many more if necessity arises. There is a broad path down the centre of the shed limited on each side by a stone trough. The cows are in two rows and face one another. The food given to the cows is natural, as opposed to such food as compressed oil cakes, etc.

Apart from this shed an isolation shed is being built for isolating cows as soon as they are found to be suffering from a contagious disease. Dr. Roux lays great stress on the necessity of this isolation shed.

The cows are milked twice a day, and the milk immediately conveyed to the bottling room, which is separated from the cowshed by a covered way. A special tank fitted with taps enables the milk to be introduced into the bottles with a minimum of handling. The bottles are the shape of small champagne bottles, and hold about one-third of a pint. They are closed with an indiarubber cork, held on by a patent clip, which yields just enough during heating to allow gas and vapour contained in the milk to be expelled.

The bottles are placed in wire baskets and transferred to the next room, where there are two sterilizing appliances. The baskets are placed on trolleys, and the trolley introduced into the sterilizer. The door is carefully closed, and steam admitted to the outer jacket of the sterilizer. Sterilization takes 40 minutes, and the temperature attained reaches 106° C. On removing the bottles the clips are taken off, the indiarubber corks adhering by atmospheric pressure. The bottles are distributed to the various crèches, and the quantity of milk supplied to each infant is prescribed by a doctor. Milk is also distributed to the necessitous poor. In this case the milk is deposited at the town hall, and distributed according to the poor-officer's dictum. The bottles are very carefully washed, special instruments, mechanical brushes, rinsers, etc., being used; a special room is set apart for this.

As to the epidemic question Dr. Roux says that it is a great evil, and necessitates the immediate closure of the crèche. Nearly half the crèches are at this moment closed in Lyons for this reason. The milk tastes quite good and natural, and has none of the taste of boiled milk. It keeps indefinitely.

PAPAIN IN MALIGNANT GROWTHS.

DR. JOHN A. SHAW-MACKENZIE (London) writes: I was much interested in Dr. W. J. Branch's communication in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of June 16th, p. 1439, and I readily acknowledge his independent work and results. In drawing attention, however, to the proteolytic and glycolytic ferments in the treatment of cancer, I (*The Nature and Treatment of Cancer*, 3rd edition) had suggested that it was not impossible that the action of plants and serums might be due to vegetable trypsin and erepsin. In respect of papain the researches of Sydney Martin (*Journal of Physiology*, vol. v, 1884) show that "we have in papain a proteolytic ferment acting almost exactly like trypsin." J. R. Green (*Annals of Botany*) refers to the tryptic group of vegetable ferments, while W. Pfeffer (*Physiology of Plants*), speaks of it as a peptic enzyme. With regard to the detail of employment and effects produced, I have already noted fluid degeneration not only from injections of trypsin into the neighbourhood of the growth but into the growth itself. Local atrophy and degeneration are, however, far from the successful treatment of cancer, and in a large number of cases the growth itself is inaccessible to local injection. The difficulty seems to me how effectually to raise the presumed deficiency (secretive and intracellular) of these alkaline and defensive ferments. I have had no experience with papain, and I feel sure Dr. Branch's promised further communication will be looked forward to with interest.

ACHONDROPLASIA.

DR. GUTHRIE RANKIN requests us to state that the paper on this subject, by himself and Dr. E. C. Mackay, published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of last week, p. 1518, was read before the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society.

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