

## Letters, Notes, and Answers.

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.

We would request correspondents who desire to ask questions in this column not to make use of such signatures as "A Member," "A Member B.M.A.," "Enquirer," and so on. By attention to this request much confusion would be avoided. Correspondents are asked to write upon one side of the paper only.

A. P. wishes to hear of a satisfactory stove to burn coke or coal for warming a waiting room 18 ft. by 15 ft.

### BOOKS FOR D.P.H. EXAMINATION.

PYOCYANEUS asks for the most suitable books to read on physics, chemistry, and engineering as applied to public health for D.P.H. examinations.

\*. \* It is not usual, neither is it necessary, that the D.P.H. candidate should read any work upon pure chemistry or engineering. The works dealing with public health analyses and practical sanitation, supplemented by the instruction given at the different teaching centres, provide all that is needed in those respects. The occasional questions on physics relate solely to those operations, etc., which fall within the sphere of practical sanitation. Watson's *Textbook of Physics* (10s. 6d.) can be confidently recommended; or even Balfour Stewart's *Lessons in Elementary Physics* would suffice if supplemented by a little special instruction, such as is usually provided at centres where candidates are prepared for the D.P.H. Both books contain a great deal of matter which the D.P.H. student need not study; it is therefore desirable to have a teacher's advice to define the scope of the reading.

### PIGMENTATION AFTER SUNBURN.

A. D. writes: A young lady has consulted me regarding the removal of sunburn marks from her shoulders. In June last, when wearing a transparent lace yoke, she sat for some time in the sun; a tracing of the lace openings was left on her shoulders. The marks peeled and are now pigmented. They are fading, but a quick means of removing them is desired.

\*. \* It is impossible to give a categorical reply, as so much depends on the amount of the pigmentation, the kind and complexion of the skin, and the kind of patient. This can only be ascertained by seeing the patient. In the present case all the chances are that a method of concealment of the parts affected will have to be adopted—by means of powders, or lotions, or ornamentation, or cut of evening dress.

### INCOME TAX.

TAXPAYER writes: I have bought a practice for £r, half of which I borrowed from my brother and paid down and half I pay the widow by instalments. I pay back to my brother and the widow one-tenth £r each per annum for five years, together with 5 per cent. interest on £r. Am I allowed to deduct the yearly instalments in considering my net income for income tax purposes as well as the interest? Also, can you refer me to a small book on income tax that deals with this and similar questions?

\*. \* Our correspondent is not entitled to deduct the two instalments when computing his profits. They represent the purchase price of the practice, and, therefore, are regarded as capital expenditure, the deduction of which is expressly declared by the Income Tax Acts to be inadmissible. Nor may the interest be deducted. The principle of the Income Tax Acts is to charge all income at its source, where possible, and our correspondent will be required to pay the tax on the interest, and may then recoup himself by deducting the amount when paying the interest to his brother and the widow respectively. *Pratt's Income Tax Acts* (8s.), or Hallett Fry's *Recovery and Adjustment of Income Tax* (3s. 6d.), may be recommended to "Taxpayer." The former book is the more comprehensive; the latter is quite elementary.

### ANSWERS.

#### INFORMATION AS TO ALGIERS.

MR. H. A. POWELL (Royal Societies' Club, St. James's Street, S.W.) writes: Having seen no reply to "G. F. M.'s" query in your issue of October 31st, I venture to give him my experiences. Towards the end of March last, I went from Cannes to Algiers, in order to compare the climates. The Algerian climate is by no means an Egyptian one, but has a due proportion of rain, wind, and cold. October and November remind one of the loveliest part of an English summer. December to March is a period recalling an English

autumn, with double its allowance of sunshine and rain, and none of its dampness. The rain falls heavily, but not for long; there are no fine drizzles; the soil is absorbent, and the ground so steep, that the moment the rain ceases and the sun reappears the roads dry and invalids can take exercise. Frost and snow are unknown. Rain and cold come from the north-west. The north-east wind is almost unknown and is harmless. There is no mistral. The north winds, tempered by 500 miles of sea, have all the mischief extracted from them on their passage, and the cold with or after rain lacks the keenness of that off snow. As a place of residence I should recommend the Villa Oliveage, situated at an elevation of about 800 ft., at the termination of the tram system. The villa stands on a large plateau, where walks can be taken immediately into the pine avenues and eucalyptus groves which abound. The house is most charmingly arranged, and has a large number of rooms with ample sunshine. A cricket field and a tennis and a croquet lawn adjoin. Saddle horses can be obtained at moderate prices. The proprietor is an Englishman, who has married a French woman; both are most affable and obliging. Prices, for rooms and board, average 10 francs per diem. The English doctor lives close by, and the tram service is a most efficient one, taking one into the town in half an hour. Certain cases of bronchial asthma do well. The steamers of the Compagnie Transatlantique cross from Marseilles to Algiers in something over twenty-six hours. The passage, more especially that part of it which lies in the Gulf of Lyons, is often a nasty one. The cabins are very cramped, especially when occupied by three passengers. The best boat is the *General Chanzy*, but she is a very wet one. The fare (return) is 100 francs, and includes lunch and dinner only—just the two meals; all others are extra. The pleasantest way to reach Marseilles is by P. and O., or other liner; but, most desirable of all is the direct route, fortnightly, from Southampton to Algiers, by German steamer. I shall be very happy to answer any other questions privately.

### LETTERS, NOTES, Etc.

#### AN ACUTE INFECTIOUS ERUPTIVE DISEASE (RUBELLA).

DR. ROBERT LEE (Pwllheli) writes: In November, 1894, I communicated to you some observations on Cases resembling Scarlatina which occurred in Fulham, with two letters received by me from Sir Samuel Wilks and the late Sir George Johnson. On December 12th, 1896, you were good enough to publish some further remarks on these cases. It seems to me that the cases described by Dr. Miles Arnold in this week's number of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL are very similar to those I brought under your notice. In the *Lancet*, October 13th, 1894, there was an article on Scarlet Fever and its Congeners, in which reference was made to my reports. In the *Medical Press and Circular*, January 27th, 1904, attention was directed to some cases described by Kramsztyk which appeared to be similar to those described ten years before, and which had not escaped observation among us.

#### STINGING FISH.

DR. EDW. B. FFENNEL (Malvern Wells) writes in reply to Dr. James Scott's letter (October 31st, p. 1416): Some years ago my right arm was stung badly by a jellyfish the size of those he describes, the same symptoms developing. I obtained great relief by applying every two hours to the whole of the right arm and hand a lotion consisting of tinct. benzoin co., one part to three of cold water. Slight stiffness was the only symptom left the next morning.

#### ERRATA.

IN the paper by Professor J. A. MacWilliam and Dr. A. H. Mackie on observations on arteries normal and pathological, published last week, p. 1477, amongst the means of abolishing *post-mortem* contraction, No. 2, ought to read "Keeping at body temperature in a warm chamber (in 1 per cent. sodium fluoride solution or blood or oil) for a number of hours," and No. 3, "Keeping in 1 per cent. sodium fluoride solution, etc., at room temperature for longer periods (for example, three or four days)." In the underlines of Figs. 4, 5, and 6, for "*post mortem*," read "after amputation."

IN Dr. C. J. Whitby's letter in the JOURNAL of November 14th, p. 1523, second column, line 19, Dr. Paul Joire's instrument for observing variations of nervous force should have been called a "sthenometer," not, as printed, an "othenometer."

#### SCALE OF CHARGES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL.

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