

Letters, Notes, and Answers.

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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 at the Notices to Correspondents of the following week.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS.—The telegraphic address of the EDITOR of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL is *Atitology, London*. The telegraphic address of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL is *Articulate, London*.

TELEPHONE (National).—
2631, Gerrard, EDITOR, BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL.
2630, Gerrard, BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.
2634, Gerrard, MEDICAL SECRETARY.

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.

DOUBTFUL asks for information or references as to the known or suggested influences of dry rot in a house on the health of the inmates.

H. L. asks as to the use of spermin in epilepsy (adult female), the best method of administration, and the usual dose to begin with.

WHAT IS "NURSERY MILK"?

DR. BRANSBY YULE (London) writes: I shall be glad if you or your readers will tell me what is generally understood by "nursery milk." Up to the present I have been fondly imagining that the term implied that it was milk obtained from one or more special cows. Now, however, I am informed by an official of one of the large milk companies that the term (as used by them) denotes absolutely pure milk, as distinguished from milk to which colouring matter has been added. For my further information he explained that the greater part of all the milk supplied retail in London at the present time contains added colouring matter, a fact of which I was not aware.

MYOTATIC IRRITABILITY.

DR. S. V. SOMEREN BOYD (Fenton, Staffs) writes: In the course of the examination of patients and a large number of new proposals for insurance, I have been in the habit of examining for myotatic irritability as a sign of recent wasting. I very soon found, however, that almost without exception those whose work is muscularly arduous show the sign even where no sign or symptom of disease is present. Colliers especially show very marked muscular irritability, with increased tendon reflexes. Dr. Milne, R.M.O. of the North Staffs Infirmary, tells me that he has observed the sign in almost every patient, ill from any cause, and not especially and only in the diseases we designate as "wasting diseases." I should be glad of information as to the reliability or the reverse of this sign as a test of wasting, as I cannot from my own experience escape the conviction that it is of much less value than our textbooks would lead us to suppose.

ANSWERS.

DR. GIBSON PARKER.—There are two institutions in the West of England which might be suitable for the imbecile boy as to whom inquiry is made: (1) The Western Counties Asylum, Starcross, Devon (registered under the Idiots Act); Secretary and Superintendent, Mr. E. W. Locke; patients received at 10s. 6d. per week. (2) Stoke Park, near Bristol (for feeble-minded); information can be obtained from the Secretary, National Institutions for Persons requiring Care and Control, 14, Howick Place, Westminster, S.W.; about 12s. weekly.

DR. JOHNSTON-LAVIS (Vittel, Vosges) writes, in reply to "Midlothian" (BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, June 29th, 1912): At Vittel a large number of cases of glycosuria are treated. In the last fortnight four English patients of mine have left with the following results: Dr. T., 2,314 grams of glucose in twenty-four hours' urine fell to nil in three weeks' cure; Mr. P., 5,719 grams on arrival, nil on departure; Mr. B., 3,671 grams on arrival, after eight days of cure nil; Mr. M., 184.5 grams (6 oz.) in twenty-four hours fell to 4.32 grams (66 grains) in twenty-four hours at end of three weeks. Besides this, their physiological equilibrium was restored; as shown by the analyses made before and after the cure in my own laboratory. Their general state was markedly improved. These are the usual results we get by treatment at Vittel.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

BRUSSELS MEDICAL GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION.

IT has already been announced in the JOURNAL that the annual meeting and launch party of the Brussels Medical Graduates' Association will take place on Saturday, July 13th. The launch will start from Maidenhead at 12.30 p.m., returning about 8 p.m. The nearest station to Maidenhead Bridge is Taplow, which can be reached by a train leaving Paddington at 11.15 a.m. The launch party will be photographed at Boulter's Lock. Railway fares at reduced rates can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Dr. Arthur Haydon, 23, Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square, W.

PLUMBISM.

COMMENTING on the statement by Dr. Arbour Stephens (report of South Wales and Monmouthshire Branch, JOURNAL, June 22nd, p. 1425), Dr. John W. Duncan (Hockley, Birmingham) writes that in all cases of plumbism he has seen the colour of the line was in his judgement best described as purple. In his opinion, white, yellow, and green all come into the colours of the gums, as well as red and blue to produce purple.

LOCAL APPLICATIONS OF TARAXACUM JUICE.

A. D. writes: In 1874 (*Pharm. Journal*) I was struck with the extreme bitterness of one of the common ligulate yellow composites. I have an idea it was once given as a variety of the dandelion (*minus?*). It is known as *Apargia autumnalis*, and may be easily identified from near allies by the bladdery condition of the stalk just under the receptacle. I made a juice according to the official formula; the yield was much less than that of dandelion, but the bitterness was far more intense; whether the juice was as highly charged with mannite I do not know. The season is just coming on when the plant will flower and can be identified. I know Dr. Herbert J. Robson will be seeking to know what particular principle in the dandelion promises to be effective, and it may be that *Apargia autumnalis* contains a larger supply. However, I send this communication to the JOURNAL, rather than to Dr. Robson, on account of the general interest.

MISS EVIE EVANS, M.B. (Cardiff), writes: In reference to a memorandum by Dr. Herbert Robson in your issue of May 25th on the benefit of taraxacum in "cancer," dandelion juice is reputed a "cure" for "warts." I once applied this remedy to a wart on the hand which projected, as nearly as I can remember, a full quarter of an inch. I rubbed in the juice of every flowering dandelion I saw for many weeks. I noticed no improvement; certainly the wart grew no smaller; finally, however, as I was in the act of applying the juice, the wart suddenly dropped out, leaving a smooth socket. The "root" of the wart was about one-third of its total length. I have never since then seen a wart disappear in this way, nor have I met any one who has seen it. The dandelion may have some action on epithelial tissue over and above the obvious blackening of the epidermis which occurs; its action could be studied more easily on "warts" than on internal "cancers," and a knowledge of its action on an innocent growth might prove to have some bearing on the problem of its action on malignant growths.

A WARNING JUSTIFIED.

A WARNING was published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of June 22nd regarding an individual who in several instances had called upon a medical man stating that he had been appointed president of a local branch of the Boy Scouts' Ambulance Brigade, and had then solicited a subscription. It is of interest to record that at the Surrey Quarter Sessions on July 2nd, William Stanley Reeves, aged 20, described as a painter, pleaded guilty to having obtained by false pretences the sum of 10s. 6d. from Dr. Colby, and 5s. from Mr. Herbert Snell, dentist, both of Woking. From the evidence of the prosecution, it appeared that the prisoner pretended to be a captain of the Woking Boys' Ambulance Brigade, and asked for subscriptions to buy stretchers, as the brigade was going to give a demonstration before the King at Windsor. When arrested the prisoner had a fully loaded six-chamber revolver in his possession. Evidence of three previous convictions against the prisoner was given, and he was sentenced to six months' hard labour.

CORRECTIONS.

IN a note entitled "Midwifery Forceps of Early Eighteenth Century Pattern," by Dr. A. Cordes of Geneva, which appeared in the JOURNAL of June 1st, p. 1276, "Levet" should be "Levret," "Malder" should be "Mülder," and "vecticum" should be "vectium."

SCALE OF CHARGES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL.

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