

is a mere gamble. I have one instance in my mind out of many in which an assistant medical officer of very long service was superseded by another medical officer of one-third the service drafted in from a neighbouring asylum. Needless to say his juniors, who naturally expected a step up, were also condemned to the unambitious and heart-breaking wait for the next vacancy. This serves to demonstrate the short-sightedness, to say nothing of gross unfairness, of some asylum superintendents, who shrink to shield themselves behind their committees. Juniors thus have no guarantee that such will not happen at future vacancies, and that they may not in the end be mere "automata and failures."

In every case the impression I received from my conversation with long-service assistant medical officers was that they would be delighted to be shown a way out, if it were possible to earn a living in any other branch of medicine, after having spent so many fruitless years in lunacy.

I am not engaged in asylum service, so have written this letter without prejudice, and merely as a warning to the fledglings who are tempted by the apparent allurements of asylum life.—I am, etc.,

September 8th.

NOT AN A.M.O.

THE CONTROL OF THE MILK SUPPLY.

SIR,—Mr. Harold J. Stiles's article and Sir John Byers's letter are most interesting and instructive. I would like to push the crusade a step further.

When we blame milk for tuberculosis in childhood, are we justified in equally blaming the cow?

For many years now I have preached and practised the treating of all tuberculosis cases in their own homes, save those that need operation, and these should be few. My reasons for so doing are many, but only one bears on the present subject—that is, the practical training of the public in what a well-ventilated and clean house has to be if they wish to keep tuberculosis under.

How much benefit will be gained from sterilized and sealed milk delivered to a home where ventilation and cleanliness of the person and cooking utensils are unknown?

Sanatoriums improve patients and then discharge them to their homes, from which it was necessary in many cases to move them owing to the unsuitable conditions existing there.

The present state of things, then, is: (1) Patients are taken away from their homes because the rooms are unsuitable; (2) patients are improved in sanatoriums; (3) homes are supplied with sterile milk and "improved patients"; (4) homes remain unaltered, for no amount of literature nor district visiting, nor anything save practical demonstration, will make the public understand that tuberculosis is a domestic disease.

My opinion is that the home, be it of man or cattle, is the breeding ground of tuberculosis, and till this is attacked we will not achieve success.

No matter what it costs us, as medical men, as municipal guardians, or as landlords, we should, meet the bill. Let us have sanatoriums and a controlled milk supply by all means, but let us also have healthy homes in which to use the milk and carry out the good work begun in sanatorium or hospital.—I am, etc.,

Lisburn, Aug. 24th.

J. L. RENTOUL, M.B.

THE CAUSE OF RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS.

SIR,—Dr. Watson, in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of September 13th (p. 704), speaks of lack of perspiration as the main cause of rheumatoid arthritis. Personally I regard it as merely a symptom. As to the treatment at Aix being in any way specific, or even highly efficacious, I have strong doubts. In many instances it has proved positively harmful, owing to the debilitating effect of the vigorous efforts to produce perspiration.

The outstanding cause of chronic arthritis is now widely acknowledged to be microbic infection. The symptoms are very numerous. In my opinion, treatment, to be efficacious, must be prolonged and continuous, and many of the most successful methods can be carried out in London or elsewhere. The sending of enfeebled, pain-racked patients out of this country is often rank cruelty.—I am, etc.,

Bournemouth, Sept. 15th,

W. J. MIDELTON.

SPECIAL HOSPITALS.

SIR,—The excellent letter from Mr. Hugh E. Jones so thoroughly expresses, though perhaps in too temperate language, the views of his colleagues that any criticism or comment from me is quite unnecessary. But there is one point about this article in the *Daily Post* which makes all the more incomprehensible its action in attacking an institution which only last year it was praising for the amount of good work it is doing for its numerous patients.

The point is that Mr. Bickerton, in his address, never mentioned the Liverpool Eye and Ear Infirmary, nor anything about incompatibles, nor the physiological connexions of the great toe, nor, in fact, anything at all connected with the main substance of the article in the *Daily Post*.

It seems difficult to believe, however, that the editor of the *Daily Post* could have evolved this article out of his imagination, and my colleagues and myself are really very much interested in the mystery. There must be some explanation of it, and as the *Daily Post* refuses to discuss the matter further I suppose we must look elsewhere for it. Perhaps Mr. Bickerton will let us know what he thinks of a newspaper article which accuses him of an act of bad taste which he never committed.—I am, etc.,

Liverpool, Aug. 27th.

EDGAR STEVENSON.

TRANSPARENT ANATOMICAL PREPARATIONS.

SIR,—The beautiful anatomical transparent preparations of Professor W. Spalteholz of Leipzig have been referred to in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, and doubtless many readers have received the prospectus of a firm now marketing objects prepared by this method for study. Similar and effective methods, however, date pretty far back. In the late Dr. Lionel Beale's *Microscope in Medicine*, London, MDCCCLVIII. (Churchill's), pp. 54, 55, 56, his method of rendering transparent animal tissues by 10 drops of NaOH strong solution to the ounce of alcohol is fully set forth, and two woodcuts of the fetus demonstrate the ossific centres well. Some years ago I prepared a number of specimens by Dr. Beale's method, and found it simple and effective for earlier fetal naked-eye anatomical and forensic study as regards the centres. I understand Dr. Beale did not patent his method.—I am, etc.,

Edinburgh, Sept. 3rd.

JAMES CAMERON.

SCLERO-CORNEAL TREPHINING IN GLAUCOMA.

SIR,—In your review of my book on *Sclero-Corneal Trephining in the Treatment of Glaucoma*, in the JOURNAL of August 30th, you draw attention to my omission to mention the Freeland Fergus trephine. As it is possible, in view of the emphasis you lay upon it, that this omission may be misinterpreted, I hasten to state that it was entirely due to the fact that I had nowhere seen the instrument described, and was unaware of its existence. This shall be rectified in a future issue of the book.—I am, etc.,

London, S.W., Aug. 30th.

R. H. ELLIOT, M.D., etc.,
Lieutenant-Colonel, I.M.S.

Medico-Legal.

CHARGE UNDER THE LUNACY ACT.

AT the Central Criminal Court on September 8th was commenced the trial of an indictment against Dr. H. T. Hamilton, of Essex House, Barnes, in connexion with two persons under his control at a house maintained both for the reception of ordinary cases of ill health and also of patients suffering from mental disease. The trial lasted three and a half days, of which approximately three were occupied by evidence for the prosecution, and the following account of the case is derived from the reports in the *Times*. The indictment included a charge of receiving for payment a certifiable lunatic without permission of the Lunacy Commissioners at a time when the defendant already had another lunatic in his authorized charge; also of ill-treating two persons who were lunatics within the meaning of the Lunacy Act of 1890; and, finally, a charge of common assault in regard to one of these persons. A point involved in the indictment was the question whether one of the patients in question—a person who at a date subsequent to her passing out of the defendant's control was certified to be insane—had been insane at any time during the period she was in residence at his house.

On conclusion of the case for the prosecution, Dr. Hamilton gave evidence on his own behalf, and several witnesses testified