

Ministry of Health instructed Dr. A. Parsons to carry out a thorough investigation. His report (published in the *Journal of Industrial Hygiene*, 1914, vol. ii, pp. 410-433) showed that on the one hand the impression in the trade of the widespread and increasing prevalence of the condition was erroneous, that many cases of baker's eczema or itch, so called, were wrongly diagnosed, that the materials used in the trade were quite innocuous to individuals with normally healthy skins, and that almost always the individuals who suffered from baker's eczema were those who worked in small bakeries where the mixing of the dough was done by hand, and in consequence the skin was liable to maceration from long contact with the wet paste; such conditions are, of course, well known to encourage the appearance of dermatitis. Dr. Prosser White of Wigan, a well known authority on industrial diseases of the skin, has also studied the subject, and has come to the conclusion that the majority of the cases are incidents rather than consequences of the work. As regards some of the points raised in our correspondent's communication, the various substances, such as the jute bags and the preservatives and bleaching reagents employed for the flour, have all been tested and found harmless. The consensus of opinion seems to be that the best way to prevent the incidence of the complaint is to carry out as far as possible the mixing of the flour and water by machinery and to improve toilet facilities. At the same time we must also take leave to doubt the accuracy of the estimate put forward by our correspondent's patient of seventy cases known to him alone. Judging by the experience of the investigators of the Ministry of Health, scientific examination of these patients would reduce their number to a very much smaller figure.

JONAH AND THE WHALE.

DR. REGINALD COCK (Hackney Road, E.), in the course of some comments on the lecture on the psychology of animals swallowed alive, delivered by Sir John Bland-Sutton (*JOURNAL*, July 18th, p. 104), writes: With regard to Jonah Sir John states: "In Matthew's Gospel the creature that swallowed Jonah is called a whale." This is quite correct, but the word used in the Greek version of St. Matthew was *κῆτος*, and is not restricted in its meaning to a whale or any cetacean; like the Latin *cete* or *cetus*, it may denote any sea monster—either a whale, or a shark, or a seal. The German word for a whale is *Wal* or *Walfisch*, and originally meant any large fish, literally a roller (*G. walzen* = to waltz). *Walrus* comes from the same root, and means a horse-whale. Although two or three species of whale are found in the Mediterranean Sea, yet it is unlikely that the "great fish" that swallowed the prophet was a whale—as we understand the word to-day. The only fish capable of making a really good job of it would be a large specimen of the white shark (*Carcharias vulgaris*), which sometimes attains the length of 30 feet. Gillius and Rondeletius record that a man in armour was found in the interior of a shark taken near Nice; and that another shark, when placed upon a car, was almost too heavy for a pair of horses to drag. Dr. Baird of the British Museum (*Cyclop. of Nat. Sciences*, p. 514) says that in the river Hugli, below Calcutta, he had seen a white shark swallow a bullock's head and horns entire.

ETHER INJECTIONS FOR WHOOPING-COUGH.

DR. C. B. THOMSON (Wimborne, Dorset) sends, to supplement the correspondence which has recently taken place in our columns, a chart showing the effect in diminishing the paroxysms in whooping-cough of intramuscular injections of ether made deeply in the gluteal region. After the injection the number of paroxysms fell on the second day from fifteen to five and later to one and two. Three injections were given on three consecutive days, the first of 0.5 c.cm. and the other two of 1 c.cm.

TREATMENT OF INCIPIENT DIABETES.

DR. T. FIELDING WOODHEAD (Huddersfield) writes to confirm his statement (*JOURNAL*, February 21st, 1925, p. 392) that red meats are concerned in diabetes insipidus. He reports the case of a married woman, aged 35, with two children, who complained of loss of energy and irritability, together with backache. The urine was colourless and the specific gravity 1005. All red meats were excluded from the diet and milk and white meats allowed, together with rest and the administration of a bitter tonic. Within a week the specific gravity of the urine increased to 1012, and seven days later was 1020. Dr. Woodhead contends that the English people would be much healthier if they ate less roast beef; he maintains that all meat ought to be boiled.

RHEUMATIC AFFECTIONS.

DR. H. A. ELLIS (London) sends a note on two recent communications which he considers contained a portion of the probable truth about rheumatic affections, and, though appearing to differ, were reconcilable. He observes that Dr. A. H. Douthwaite (*JOURNAL*, June 27th, p. 1170) says that the principal precursors to rheumatism are lowering of the body resistance, with radiating pain over the occiput following the course of the occipital nerves, due to direct infection of the nerve roots or compression from inflammatory swelling; the alteration of the character of the skin; peripheral neuritis of the posterior nerve roots; muscular atrophy not due to disuse but to reflex trophic disturbance; and absence of hypochlorhydria. The treatment recommended was vaccine therapy. In the other communication, on arthritis deformans, by Dr. L. S. Ashcroft and others (*JOURNAL*, July 4th, p. 13), it is stated (in addition to bacteriological findings) that the patients had hypochlorhydria, and that treatment with hydrochloric acid relieved the condition. In the course of two dis-

cussions at the Royal Society of Medicine (*JOURNAL*, January 24th, p. 162, and March 14th, p. 509), Dr. Ellis stated that in all forms of rheumatism a condition of neuritis existed, which was probably ganglionic and might affect Hunter's nerve fibres; it certainly affected Hunter's non-somatic muscle fibres. He believed that the condition was originated by various causes primarily of metabolic character, and that it generally varied in incidence accordingly. Deficiency of acid was always evident in arthritis deformans, as shown by the small amount or absence of urinary phosphoric acid and a great increase in the ammonia phosphoric acid ratio, usually associated with a great output of magnesium. Another cause was an increase of phosphoric acid with deficient elimination accompanying metabolic excess. Increase of the acid ratio in a single specimen of urine and diminution in the tide was characterized by hyperaesthesia of the shoulders and outer surfaces of the thighs, and associated with an increased relative output of uric acid. The prevalent septic or toxic cases were nearly always in the first or acid deficiency class, and benefit was almost invariably obtained by giving phosphoric acid. Dr. Ellis considers that this evidence supports his view that rheumatism is a condition of ganglionic neuritis, activated by metabolic disturbance, and associated with one of the three causes named, which can be distinguished by urinary analysis and the patient accordingly treated effectively.

MEASLES: WHOOPING-COUGH: MEASLES.

DR. HUGH SMITH (Dixon's Green, Dudley) writes: In the middle of May this year a boy, aged 3 years, had measles. As soon as the measles cleared up he developed whooping-cough, which he still (July 26th) has, and during this last week he has again developed measles. There is no doubt about any of the infections. Is not this rather unusual?

PRESERVATION OF BODIES FOR IDENTIFICATION.

IN the course of an inquest recently Dr. Waldo spoke of the advantages of the formalin preserving apparatus in use at the two courts over which he presides, in the City and in Southwark. He said that it preserved the features, and so was of use in identification; that it did away with any danger from infection, was particularly useful in cases of death due to drowning and other causes in which decomposition quickly sets in, and in criminal cases, where it may be necessary to keep a body for some time before burial. We understand that the cold chamber is generally considered to be better, and is in use in many Continental towns.

COW BYRES.

DR. T. M. ALLISON (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) writes: An important point in preventing tuberculosis in milch cows is to do away with the central feeding passage in cow byres. If a cow comes into a clean herd and is infected with pulmonary tuberculosis, it coughs infected froth and spray into the face and fodder of the opposite animal, and thus spreads tuberculosis. All cow byres should be arranged with the cows' heads (in single or double lines) towards the wall, where ample light and ventilation should be provided, and the wall should be limewashed.

DOZING AT THE WHEEL.

DR. G. C. M. M'GONIGLE (M.O.H. Stockton-on-Tees) writes: On page 268 of the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of August 8th you print a leaderette under the title "Dozing at the wheel." It would appear, unfortunately, that "unaccountable" accidents of this nature are increasing in number. In all similar accidents it would be of value if coroners' juries inquired if an automatic windscreen wiper were fitted and if, at the time of the accident, this apparatus was in use. The automatic windscreen wiper swings backwards and forwards through an arc of a circle directly in the line of vision of the driver, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that this rhythmic movement might exert a hypnotic effect upon the driver.

CORRECTION.

DR. HELEN BOYLE calls attention to some little inaccuracies in the report of her evidence given before the Royal Commission on Lunacy on June 22nd, and published in the *JOURNAL* of June 27th (p. 1185). The hospital referred to is the Lady Chichester Hospital, Hove; it has 39 beds (not 29). With regard to nursing homes, she said the only bad nursing home she had ever known to survive in its iniquity was one which was under supervision.

WIESBADEN WATERS.

MESSRS. HERTZ AND CO., 9, Mincing Lane, London, E.C.3, have been appointed by the municipality of Wiesbaden sole agents in this country for the waters of the springs there, for the salts obtained from them by evaporation, and for other preparations.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 34, 35, 38, and 39 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 36 and 37.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 92.