

he had a true appreciation of human needs, and the need for doctors may be great. Dr. Vickers agrees that in a state of war there is a good case for the existence of a Central Medical War Committee. As a former secretary of a local medical war committee I can tell him that, though the emergency may be remote, it is not safe to wait.—I am, etc.,
Sheffield.

HENRY BROWN.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

Mechanism of "Conversion"

Dr. C. S. STADDON (Ipswich) writes: Dr. William Sargent's very able and interesting lecture (August 11, p. 311) seems to me to be typical of what one might term the purely scientific approach to the subject under review. It deals with the human being as if he were an animal only, and fails altogether to take into account the divine spirit or soul of the individual. Here surely is the difference between *Homo sapiens* and Pavlov's dogs. Of course their bodies act in a similar way, as Dr. Sargent so ably proves, but he does not seem to appreciate that, whilst human appetites and desires are similar to those of the animals, yet the human has inbred in him a conscience which guides him in controlling those desires which appears to be lacking in the animal. This must never be lost sight of in assessing the reactions of masses of people such as occur, as he says, in religious gatherings, where animal instincts seem to take control of the individual man for the time, but often only temporarily.

"War" and "Peace"

Dr. A. F. MOHUN (London, N.W.3) writes: Those of us who do not wish to see our country destroyed in a futile orgy of jellied-petrol and atomic bombing should be grateful to Dr. H. E. Vickers (August 4, p. 300) and to Dr. Duncan Leys and Professor L. S. Penrose (August 11, p. 363) for their timely statements about our present situation. As doctors we must, if we respect the Hippocratic oath and our ethical traditions, do everything in our power to counter the continuing stream of (partly unrecognized) propaganda which has the property of conditioning men's minds to the idea that war is inevitable. Phrases such as "If war should come" appear in official publications; these words suggest in a subtle way that wars, like tempests and earthquakes, just happen; in fact, they are the act of man, and they begin before the date of declaration in a diffuse process of propaganda and conditioning, coupled with the physical preparations of rearmament. We must realize that there exist rational analyses of our present situation which are essential correctives to the political hysteria of the popular press; to name only one, I may instance Kenneth Ingram's statement *Negotiation—not Appeasement*, published by the National Peace Council at 144, Southampton Row, W.C.1.

Vegetarians and Atherosclerosis

Mr. WILLIAM HAMILTON (Bellshill, Lanark) writes: I was interested to read of Dr. May Elliot's suggestion (August 4, p. 300) to investigate vegetarians on the lines Dr. J. B. Firstbrook (July 21, p. 133) suggested. . . . Two years ago, as a student, I was interested in the blood picture of vegetarians, and the outcome of an appeal to the Vegetarian Society of Glasgow for subjects yielded five only from a large membership. This scarcity of material, combined with the fact that those who volunteered were in the younger age group and therefore not sufficiently typical of the whole, made the investigation of no value. I would suggest that any approach to vegetarians be made by a doctor who is himself a vegetarian.

Metric System

Dr. F. M. PURCELL (Gold Coast) writes: I wish to write a line of appreciation of the annotation "Metric System in Medicine" (May 26, p. 1195). As one who some ten years ago was engaged in diet and nutrition surveys I had ample opportunity of experiencing the confusion and bother to which the obligatory use of the avoirdupois and metric systems gave rise.

Correction

Dr. A. W. FRANKLAND (Paddington, W.2) writes: Dr. J. D. Lendrum (July 21, p. 148) showed that, depending upon the technique used, varying results can be obtained when carrying out diagnostic tuberculin skin tests. Reference is made in the paper to the work of Long and Seibert: the timothy grass product was in fact the product, not of pollen, but of timothy grass bacillus—*Mycobacterium phlei*.

Obituary

S. I. TURKINGTON, M.D., D.P.H.

Dr. S. I. Turkington, one of the foremost clinical teachers in the Belfast medical school, died on August 1 after a brief illness.

Samuel Ireland Turkington, who was of Huguenot descent, was born in Cookstown, Co. Tyrone, in 1885. He studied medicine at Queen's University, Belfast, graduating M.B., B.Ch. in 1912 and proceeding M.D. in 1915. After an appointment as resident medical officer at the Royal Victoria Hospital he went on to the Forster Green Hospital for Diseases of the Chest for a further year. His interest in pulmonary disease, which began in his undergraduate days, was fostered by his experience in these posts, and he obtained a practical outlet for his enthusiasm when he was appointed assistant tuberculosis officer for Antrim, a post which he held from 1914 to 1919 (he took the D.P.H. in 1915). His ability as a clinical teacher was recognized early, for he became assistant to the professor of medicine in 1916 and medical registrar to the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1920. In this year he was appointed assistant physician to the Ulster Hospital for Children and Women, and four years later to the Royal Victoria Hospital, from which he retired (on reaching the age limit) last year. His published papers were mainly on diseases of the lungs. During the 1939-45 war he acted as consultant physician to the Royal Navy in Northern Ireland.

F. M. B. A. writes: "Turkie" (as he was universally known) was a man of wide culture and scholarship. His studies in the faculty of arts were interrupted by ill-health, which prevented his obtaining an arts degree but never dimmed his interest in the classics. Horace was one of his favourite mental relaxations and his constant companion on holiday. His interest in words and phrases used in all parts of Ulster was unending, and his collection of these unique expressions and their usage and precise meaning will provide a valuable source of information to students of languages and dialects.

As a clinical teacher he was outstanding. He learned much from his chief, the late Professor J. A. Lindsay, by his intimate association with him as assistant for seven years. But most of his success was due to his own character and talents. At the bedside he was a model for the student in the sympathetic manner of his approach to the patient, his outstanding clinical examination, and his interpretation of the findings: he used the ancillary departments of the hospital to confirm the results of his physical examination. He created for himself a reputation which was recognized by students, general practitioners, and patients, and he merited the well-recognized demand for his services as a consultant physician of the finest type.

Dr. Turkington is survived by his sister, to whom our sympathy is extended. He is mourned also by his colleagues in medical and lay spheres. His circle of friends was intimate and dear to him and he to them. Those who were privileged to enjoy his companionship, particularly at the Friday night in his club at dinner or bridge, will retain memories of a scholar, a gentleman, and a very lovable human being.