

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Haematocolpos

Dr. R. L. SONI (Burma) writes: The cases described by Dr. A. L. Craddock in the *Journal* of December 25, 1937, p. 1304, are evidently of "partial haematocolpos with haematometra." Haematometra in such cases is secondary, and follows the non-recognition of the haematocolpos. The condition seems to be rare in general practice. I encountered only one case during the last nine years, and that was recorded in the *Indian Medical Gazette* (1937, 72, 93). This was in a Burmese girl, aged 15, in whom the presenting symptoms simulated dysentery. There was history of amenorrhoea and of two attacks of abdominal colic, each lasting three days, three and eight weeks earlier. The labia minora in their lower halves were found fused together to form a bulging pouch, which contained foul-smelling phosphatic deposits, probably derived from the ammoniacal decomposition of urine. The Müllerian duct for an inch or more in its lower part had failed to canalize. A regular dissection had to be carried out to arrive at the blind lower end of the vagina. The final result was good.

Treatment of Erysipelas

"R. E. N." writes: In his article on this subject (*Journal*, February 12, p. 346) Mr. John Hosford states that sulphanilamide "has a profound, sometimes dramatic, effect: the temperature drops to normal in forty-eight hours or less." There is a much more dramatic treatment which is safer and cheaper. In some twelve cases of erysipelas I have found that an injection of 10 c.cm. of boiled milk intramuscularly promotes a cure within twelve hours. In one case only I gave a second injection because the temperature had not entirely settled. It would seem that this treatment is too simple to be generally adopted.

Correct Footwear

Dr. FREDERIC SANDERS (Chingford) writes: Mr. S. T. Irwin (*Journal*, March 19, p. 649) is in error in stating that hallux valgus would not exist if the great toe were allowed freedom until the age of 10. In all children's shoes such freedom exists to-day, but the moment the child reaches adult size the shoe trade has nothing to offer except shoes costing thirty to forty shillings, usually stamped with some bone-setter's name! One of these days a Minister of Defence will call for statistics of recruits turned down for feet. He will then say to the Minister of Health: "In future, in addition to giving away milk you will provide for boys' shoes of a proper shape, and continue to provide them, in increasing sizes, for any 'old boy' who needs them, at *half the market value*." This will raise a howl of abuse from the manufacturers, who will then be told: "Very well, you provide shoes for the public at a reasonable price *made on our lasts* and we go out of business. Until you do, we stay in it." The whole problem of men's shoes would be settled in a fortnight. Women's shoes may safely be left to the lady doctors and to Mr. Bernard Roth, whose pious horror of a first-class actress in "sensible brogues" doubtless finds an echo in many an orthopaedic heart!

Supply of Tryparsamide

MESSRS. MAY AND BAKER LIMITED (Dagenham, London) write: The references in the technical and lay press to the report of the Medical Research Council have been dealt with in a general way by a statement from the Association of British Chemical Manufacturers. We therefore wish to limit ourselves to the misunderstanding which has arisen, owing to the ambiguous wording of the Medical Research Council's report, in regard to the origin of tryparsamide. It is true that tryparsamide was discovered in America, in the laboratories of the Rockefeller Foundation, but it is entirely incorrect to suggest that the tryparsamide used in the Empire since 1925 has been of American origin. Since that date, we have supplied all the tryparsamide used here and in the Empire, and this has been completely manufactured in our factory. We are able to continue to supply all the tryparsamide required for use here and in the Empire.

Medical Aid for Barcelona

Dr. H. B. MORGAN, Chairman, Spanish Medical Aid Committee, 24, New Oxford Street, W.C.1, writes: The official casualty list published in Barcelona gives 1,300 dead and 2,000 wounded as a result of the terrible and continuous

air raids last week. In addition over 10,000 people are homeless. We have decided at an emergency meeting to send help to the medical services in Barcelona. Apart from military casualties, which have inevitably been severe in the recent Aragon offensive, the Spanish Government is now called on to care for thousands of civilians wounded during intensive air raids on Barcelona and other cities. Bombs have been dropped on the most densely populated quarters, and the population, fleeing into the hills, are systematically attacked from the air by machine-gun fire. We have ordered ambulances, surgical instruments, and medical supplies, which will be sent out at once. This is, of course, in addition to the already heavy commitments for our established hospitals. Send us anything you can, however small, but send it at once.

Demonstrations of Physical Therapy Equipment

With the object of stimulating interest in physical medicine, a special series of demonstrations of physical therapy equipment were given last week at the showrooms of Stanley Cox Limited at 11, Gerrard Street, W.1. Although the demonstrations were given under commercial auspices, no "sales talk" was introduced, and an effort was made, with a physiologist in attendance, to interest medical visitors in the physical factors underlying this branch of treatment. The principal attention was directed to an apparatus named the "indolor," a painless stimulator for muscles and nerves, deriving its power from the alternating current mains, and designed to replace the Bristow coil. The cathode-ray oscillogram of the "indolor" revealed a beautiful wave-form, with no after-waves of the stimulus, so that the natural stimulating impulse of the nerve, and that only, is artificially reproduced. This was shown in contrast to the cathode-ray oscillogram of the Bristow coil, which is made up of a damped train of siné waves, each of which must cause a corresponding nerve impulse to be set up, and the impulses of each group other than the first can produce no further contraction of the muscle but may be a cause of pain to the patient, and account for the inconvenience often experienced in treatment by the Bristow coil. Ultra-short-wave diathermy was also demonstrated, and the characteristics of the energy generated by various systems were well shown.

Vicissitudes of a Leper

On February 28 death ended the astonishing career of John Ruskin Early, a North Carolina mountaineer, who, contracting leprosy some thirty years ago, spent the remainder of his life alternately being confined as a leper, escaping, or being released as apparently cured. The diagnosis was confirmed by Hansen, discoverer of the leprosy bacillus, and in 1917 a special "leprosarium" was built for him at Carville, Louisiana.

Dominion Dairy Products

During the present century science and the organization of modern transport have combined to bring to this country plentiful supplies of dairy products, meat, fruit, and other foodstuffs from all parts of the world. Nowhere has greater progress been made than in the provision of inexpensive yet high-quality dairy products by the overseas Dominions, which are to-day, according to the Imperial Economic Committee, responsible for half our supplies of butter and three-quarters of our requirements of cheese. Concurrently with the post-war increase in Dominion butter supplies, Britain's butter consumption has risen by more than 50 per cent., the average during 1937 being 24.7 lb. a head (or nearly half a pound weekly). The high and uniform vitamin potency of Dominion butter has been a subject of frequent comment. Typical of such observations is the statement made by the Ministry of Health's Advisory Committee on Nutrition in its report, *The Criticism and Improvement of Diets* (p. 5): "There is the possibility that butter may be devoid of vitamin D in winter and, consequently, if butter is being relied upon as a protective food, it would be best to specify butter such as New Zealand, which is fairly constant in its vitamin D content."

Correction

In the sketch of Alexander Skene, published on February 12 (p. 349), Long Island Cottage Hospital should read Long Island College Hospital. This institution recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of its Hoagland Laboratory, when Dr. Oswald T. Avery of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research spoke on "The State of Bacteriology Fifty Years Ago and To-day."