

The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (formerly the Academic Assistance Council) will hold a public meeting on Monday, February 6, at 8.15 p.m., in the Great Hall, University College, Gower Street, London, W.C., for the purpose of launching a national appeal for funds for the work being done on behalf of academic refugees. The Archbishop of York will take the chair, and the speakers will be the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Hoare, the Marquess of Reading, and Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell.

A postgraduate course in hygiene and bacteriology will be held at Bologna University from April 1 to May 31. Further information can be obtained from the Segretaria della Università, Via Zamboni 33, Bologna.

The issue of *La Riforma Medica* for November 26, 1938, contains an account of the proceedings of the sixteenth congress of the Italian Society of Paediatrics, held at Genoa on September 15, when the subjects for discussion were meningitis with clear fluid, excluding tuberculous meningitis, prophylaxis and treatment of acute nutritional disorders in the infant, and physical education and sport in school children.

The King has given Professor Arthur Frederick Bernard Shaw, M.D., F.R.C.P.I., authority to wear the Insignia of Commander of the Order of the Nile, conferred upon him by the King of Egypt in recognition of valuable services rendered by him as Professor of Pathology in the Egyptian University, Cairo, on resignation of that chair. •

## Letters, Notes, and Answers

All communications in regard to editorial business should be addressed to THE EDITOR, BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, B.M.A. HOUSE, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, W.C.1.

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Authors desiring REPRINTS of their articles published in the *British Medical Journal* must communicate with the Secretary, B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1, on receipt of proofs. Authors over-seas should indicate on MSS. if reprints are required, as proofs are not sent abroad.

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The TELEPHONE NUMBER of the British Medical Association and the *British Medical Journal* is EUSTON 2111.

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## QUERIES AND ANSWERS

### Diet in Intestinal Atony

"S. A." has a patient who has twice been operated upon for intestinal obstruction. He would be glad to know what foodstuffs—arranged, if possible, in order of their gas-producing properties—are most apt to cause flatulence, a condition from which the patient suffers rather markedly. He would also like to know what others have found from experience to be the best drugs for intestinal atony.

### Tapeworm

"X. Y. Z." writes: I have a woman patient with a tapeworm (*Bothriocephalus latus*). The treatment employed has been: (1) starvation as a preliminary; (2) copious alkaline drinks to remove mucus; and (3) ext. filicis liq. m 90 to m 120

in emulsion. On the several occasions this has been given there was prompt evacuation of the worm minus the head. Can anyone suggest an effective method of dealing with it?

### Spasmodic Torticollis

"ANXIOUS" asks for suggestions as to the treatment of a case of spasmodic torticollis of nine months' duration in a man aged 60. Tonic spasms of the right trapezius accompanied by tonico-clonic contractions of the left sterno-mastoid, in which the right sterno-mastoid seems also involved to a lesser degree, cause almost continuous uncontrollable and violent jerking movements of the head. Sedatives appear to aggravate the condition.

### Treatment of Cracked or Sore Nipples

Mr. R. MAXWELL SAVAGE, B.A., F.I.C. (Chief Chemist, S. Maw, Son and Sons Ltd.), writes: In your issue of December 24, 1938 (p. 1350), Dr. J. Walker writes of Wansbrough's nipple shield. These shields were brought to my notice several years ago, and I can confirm from experiment that lead is to be found in milk left in contact with the shields. To those who, like Dr. Walker, enjoy a full knowledge of this action, this is just what is wanted, but inquiries have shown that not everyone is aware that the shields work by acting as a source of lead lactate, and we have felt some uneasiness about the appliance. For example, recently it was found that the matron of a large maternity hospital regarded the shields as purely mechanical. I have no knowledge of any cases in which lead poisoning of the infant has resulted, nor do they seem likely when the shields are used by fully informed persons who, as Dr. Walker remarks, take care that "the nipple is carefully cleansed after removal of the shield," but the supply of lead lactate is inversely proportional to the cleanliness of the user, since fresh milk contains no lactic acid. If a revival of this old device is to be experienced is it likely to cause trouble in the hands of a not-too-clean mother in her own home? Any experience in this connexion would be welcomed as a basis for such action as a supplier can take, for with an appliance which is "almost forgotten" there is a responsibility to see that knowledge of its proper use revives with it, and is passed so far as possible along the line to the ultimate user.

## LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

### Medicine Marches On

The "March of Time" films of various aspects of contemporary life are well known, and a recent addition entitled "Men of Medicine" proves an effective antidote to "The Citadel." Within the short period of ten minutes one is given quite a clear idea of the prolonged and elaborate training which goes to make a doctor, and more than a suggestion of the historical forces that are behind him. If we were to be hypercritical we might suggest that the American student is apparently not taught that inspection precedes palpation, to judge from the way "Dr. Gibson," the hero of the film, diagnoses his first case of appendicitis in practice. We wonder, too, whether he really needed sixty instruments for an appendicectomy. The problems of "socialized medicine" are introduced by some of the protagonists in the modern American scene, among them being Dr. Morris Fishbein, the Editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

### Circumcision

Dr. T. GERALD GARRY (Folkestone) writes: It may interest correspondents who periodically discuss circumcision in the pages of the *Journal* to know that I have fully treated the history and origin of this strange tribal mutilation in my book *African Doctor*, just published by J. Gifford, Ltd.

### Corrigendum

In the article on anaesthesia in thoracic surgery by Dr. J. T. Hunter (*Journal*, January 21, p. 102) there appears the following statement: "Magill (1936a) describes a modification of the Howard Jones technique, using procaine 1 in 1,500. . . ." Messrs. Ciba Limited point out that the solution used by Dr. Magill was *percaïne*, 1 in 1,500. It was, of course, for this solution that the technique was originally described by the late Dr. Howard Jones.