

plug should not be pushed into the tooth-socket but only placed over it, as prevention of the normal clot forming in the socket inevitably leads to sepsis, sequestration of the bony walls, and delayed healing.

Cooking Eggs and Salmonella

Q.—You published (Oct. 19, 1946, p. 583) an annotation about the danger of infection of dried egg powder by salmonella organisms. Is there any method of cooking which will neutralize this danger?

A.—Salmonella organisms have the usual susceptibility of non-sporogenous bacteria to heat; that is to say, at 55° C. they are killed within 30 minutes, and at higher temperatures in proportionally shorter periods, survival at over 70° C. being measured in seconds rather than in minutes. The following culinary methods of using egg or egg powder must be considered in this light. In the preparation of salad creams no heat is employed; the organisms survive unless killed by vinegar. When poaching eggs (this applies only to shell eggs) the yolk is not adequately heated and the organisms survive; this is the commonest mode of infection. The same applies to light boiling. In scrambling and omelette-making, if the whole of the mixture is coagulated the organisms will be killed; if any of it remains fluid they may not. Only cake-making may be considered entirely safe.

Dermatomyositis

Q.—A boy of 16 is suffering from dermatomyositis. What are the aetiology and the prognosis of this condition, and is there any possibility of cure?

A.—The aetiology is unknown; some believe the affection to be infective, others that it has an endocrine origin—especially related to dysthyroidism. Prognosis is very variable; recovery may occur or the affection may remain stationary at a stage not causing great disability. Death is often by intercurrent respiratory disease if disablement involves the chest musculature. Biochemical investigation may help to indicate a method of treatment, especially in relation to sodium and potassium metabolism. A similarity to myasthenia gravis and to Addison's disease should not be overlooked. Occasionally ephedrine has seemed to help. Treatment is essentially symptomatic.

Itching of the Hands

Q.—A lady aged 40 complains of intolerable itching of the hands soon after immersion in cold water. With warm water the irritation is not so marked. Examination reveals no abnormality of the skin, the local temperature being unaffected. She is subject to Raynaud's phenomenon and moderate chilblains on the fingers in the winter. Any advice would be appreciated.

A.—It would be interesting to know how long the patient has been subject to this trouble and whether it followed any infective illness. The condition would seem to be related to "cold urticaria," which is generally seen at puberty or after an infective illness. This is apparently due to the local effects on the smaller vessels and nerve-endings of a metabolite produced in the tissues by the cold. "Benadryl" might control such a reaction. Vitamin K therapy might improve the poor peripheral circulation and reduce the tendency to such reaction.

Third-generation Syphilis

Q.—Is congenital syphilis a cause of sterility or infertility? If not, is it possible for a congenital syphilitic to transmit the infection to his or her offspring?

A.—Congenital syphilis is no more likely to cause sterility or infertility than the acquired form or than any disease which affects the organs of procreation. Naturally, such conditions as congenital tabes or G.P.I. are likely to cause infertility, and gummata of the testicles to result in sterility; such conditions are rare. It is generally believed nowadays, though it is denied by some, that third-generation syphilis does occur, but it is certainly very rare. It does not seem possible for a congenitally syphilitic male to produce a syphilitic baby by a healthy mother.

Letters and Notes

Photographs of Nigerian Pagans

An exhibition of photographs, taken by Dr. Joseph Denfield, was opened on Monday, Feb. 10, by Mr. Michael Huxley, Editor of the *Geographical Magazine*, at the Ilford Galleries, 101, High Holborn, London, W.C.1. These photographs were taken by Dr. Denfield during his tour of military service in Northern Nigeria. They illustrate vividly the life of the pagan inhabitants of the Bauchi Plateau who live in conditions almost entirely unaffected by Western civilization. Apart from their very high artistic merit many photographs bring out points of medical interest: the use of keloids for personal adornment; the decorative value of nose and lip plugs; duck-billed women, a fashion originally introduced to make females unattractive to raiders from other tribes but persisting even when raiding has ceased. A tight string round the neck is said to be a sovereign remedy against endemic goitre, which has a high incidence in some of the villages.

The Irigwe tribe is divided into male and female sections: a male of the female section is forbidden to wear any clothes whatsoever, while his hair must be dressed in feminine style. Psychoanalysts have not yet visited this tribe. One photograph illustrates the flogging ceremony of the Fulani. It may seem a little odd to select your herdsman because of his power to endure a severe flogging without flinching, but like the Spartans in ancient Greece no Fulani youth even to-day has any chance of obtaining a wife unless he has proved his manhood in this way. The exhibition will remain open for some weeks.

Control of Measles

Mr. ELWIN HARRIS, F.R.C.S. (Bristol) writes: I am interested in the articles on measles in the *Journal* for Feb. 8 (pp. 209 and 225). Many years ago oiling the patient was recommended for scarlet fever, and I have always used it in the treatment of measles. The treatment consists of a hot blanket bath followed by the application of oil to the whole body. The oil used is ol. eucalypti 10 min. (0.6 ml.) and ol. olivae ad 1 oz. (28 ml.). This is carried out each evening and in severe cases in the morning as well. I cannot recall a single case of otitis media complicating measles during twenty-two years of general practice. I have attributed the efficacy of the treatment to the fact that the patient inhales the eucalyptus throughout the night, but your articles suggest that it may be otherwise. Not only is the treatment effective in preventing complications, but it is extremely soothing to the patient and induces sleep. Oiling floors and sheets is hardly practicable in domiciliary practice, but oiling the patient is easy and, in my experience, extremely effective.

Correction: Whooping-cough Immunization

In the answer to the question (Feb. 1, p. 207) as to which public health authorities were carrying out immunization against whooping-cough on a large scale, it was stated that trials had been organized in the boroughs of Tottenham and Wembley, and in the City of Manchester, using American vaccines. A somewhat similar trial, using Sauer vaccine, was undertaken in Oxford in 1944 with the co-operation of the medical officer of health and the Medical Research Council. This Oxford trial should have been mentioned in the original answer.

Correction

In the *Journal* of Feb. 8 at page 224 under "Books Received" the editors of the book *The Nation's Food* were incorrectly designated; the following is correct: A. L. Bacharach, M.A., F.R.I.C. and T. Rendle, F.R.I.C., with an introduction by Sir Joseph Barcroft, C.B.E., F.R.S.

In the reply to a question on the increase in tuberculosis (Jan. 4, p. 39) the figures for tuberculosis from 1939 to 1944 were those for males only.

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