

Letters, Notes, and Answers

All communications in regard to editorial business should be addressed to **The EDITOR, British Medical Journal, British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1.**

ORIGINAL ARTICLES and LETTERS forwarded for publication are understood to be offered to the *British Medical Journal* alone unless the contrary be stated. Correspondents who wish notice to be taken of their communications should authenticate them with their names, not necessarily for publication.

Authors desiring REPRINTS of their articles published in the *British Medical Journal* must communicate with the Financial Secretary and Business Manager, British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1, on receipt of proofs.

All communications with reference to ADVERTISEMENTS, as well as orders for copies of the *Journal*, should be addressed to the Financial Secretary and Business Manager.

The TELEPHONE NUMBERS of the British Medical Association and the *British Medical Journal* are MUSEUM 9861, 9862, 9863, and 9864 (internal exchange, four lines).

The TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESSES are:

EDITOR OF THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, *Aitiology Westcent, London.*

FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND BUSINESS MANAGER (Advertisements, etc.), *Articulate Westcent, London.*

MEDICAL SECRETARY, *Medisecra Westcent, London.*

The address of the Irish Office of the British Medical Association is 16, South Frederick Street, Dublin (telegrams: *Bacillus, Dublin*; telephone: 62550 Dublin), and of the Scottish Office, 7, Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh (telegrams: *Associate, Edinburgh*; telephone 24361 Edinburgh).

QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Effect of Prolonged Injections of Insulin on Subcutaneous Tissue

"D. M." writes: In the *Journal* of June 27th and July 4th are inquiries about loss of subcutaneous tissue resulting from insulin administration. This can be a very real trouble to a diabetic. I have under my care a lady who has required very heavy doses of insulin for nearly seven years, all four limbs being used for injections. For over five years no loss of tissue was observed, but for about eighteen months the thinning of the parts used for injection has been very striking. I should be glad to know from someone with wide experience of insulin treatment: (1) any explanation why this should occur in exceptional cases; (2) whether the occurrence has any relation to large doses and prolonged administration.

Lochnera Rosea

Dr. JOHN M. DALZIEL writes from The Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: I shall be grateful for any information with regard to the medicinal use of the "Madagascar periwinkle"—*Lochnera (Vinca) rosea*. The leaves are said to be a remedy for diabetes in South Africa, and a proprietary medicine called "covinca" is in use there. Is there any published record of investigation either of its properties or of its clinical value in that disease?

The Cigarette Habit

"BUNGALOW" would be glad of any "tips" to help a weak-minded patient to overcome excessive cigarette smoking.

A Cosmetic Query

Dr. I. G. BRIGGS writes: I have a lady patient, aged 30, who uses the ordinary good-class cosmetics for the face, but for some ten days before to five days after the menses suffers from a few pimples (which are negligible), and a condition in which the pores are very widely open, causing an unpleasant "greasy" feeling (no perspiration). The patient is a demonstrator for cosmetics, and in this condition, when powder is applied to the face, as it has to be during her employment, the enlarged pores show very noticeably, and are a hindrance. Can any reader suggest treatment? The patient has tried astringent lotions.

Tennis Blisters

"L. E. P." writes, in reply to "T. W. S." (Surrey): Blisters on the feet (and hands in tennis players) are generally due to free sweating. This can be arrested and the skin made hard and dry by painting with a saturated solution of picric acid in spirit, allowing it to evaporate, and then washing in many changes of water to prevent staining of bedclothes, etc. The drawback to this method is the ugly discoloration of the skin, and more particularly of the nails, which—negligible in the case of the feet—is very noticeable in the case of the hands. However, it is effective.

Income Tax

Claim for Sundry Expenses

"B. W." inquires whether he can deduct as professional expenses the cost of (1) advertising for an assistant, (2) drawing up agreement in connexion with the assistant, and (3) renewal or replacement of such books as the *Medical Directory*.

** The answer is in the affirmative in each case, with one possible qualification. If the agreement with the intended assistant contemplates his becoming a partner, to that extent it deals with the constitution rather than the actual carrying on of the practice, and in such circumstances the claim to deduct the costs of his engagement would be incorrect, at least as regards a part of such costs.

Car Transactions

"F. F. S." sold a car in April, 1931, for £175 and bought another in replacement for £330. What can he claim?

** He can claim the out-of-pocket expense of £330 - £175 = £155 as a professional cost of running the practice during the year 1931. If, however, the car sold cost less than £330, he can claim only the excess of the cost over the £175, the balance in such a case representing the cost of improving the car equipment.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

The "Medical Directory"

Messrs. J. and A. CHURCHILL, publishers of the *Medical Directory* (40, Gloucester Place, Portman Square, W.1) write: The annual circular has been posted to each member of the medical profession. If the form has not been received a duplicate will be sent on request. We shall be grateful for the return of the forms by an early post.

"The Hawker Nuisance"

Dr. E. H. STRANGE (London, E.5) writes: Owing, no doubt, to the prevailing trade depression the hawker of doubtful preparations and appliances seems this year a more than usually frequent visitor to one's consulting room. The technique is in all cases the same. An individual of immense self-assurance at once lets forth a flood of patter as to the merits of a preparation, it may be, to keep one's professional plate and car bright and untarnished for several months, or of a device to sterilize instruments in a tumbler or a jug in two minutes. He claims to be the inventor of the preparation or appliance, and claims that it is new. He shows one by the counterfoils in his order book that many of one's neighbours and friends have fallen for his patter. He makes great play with the fact that he is not taking money at once; one pays C.O.D. later. But the medical man is never allowed to test a sample or examine the appliance at leisure. Goods thus hawked around are trash at the price demanded. The guinea appliance was not invented by the hawker, neither is it new. It can be bought from any electrical firm for about a quarter the price the hawker asks. The preparation with the fancy name for which he asks 15s. 6d. for four ounces is an old one, which can be bought at a few shillings a pint. It would be a service to many a busy practitioner if medical men would tell every hawker, including the hawker of medical books, at once two simple and obvious truths: (1) firms of repute do not hawk their goods around; (2) goods which are hawked around are made to be hawked around, and would not be saleable by any other means than high-power salesmanship and bluff. The price demanded is far above the market value.

Corrigendum

Our account of the presentation to Dr. Arnold Lyndon (July 11th, p. 72) contained a slip which should be corrected. Dr. Lyndon was chairman of the Surrey Panel Committee from 1920 to 1931, a period of eleven years. His predecessor in the chairmanship (1913 to 1920) was Dr. Cecil Lankester of Guildford.

Vacancies

Notifications of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50, and 51 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 48 and 49.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 120.