

Letters, Notes, and Answers

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Drug Treatment of Paralysis Agitans

Dr. H. E. LITTLEDALE writes: I should be glad of the advice of some experienced reader on the use of stramonium in the treatment of well-established paralysis agitans, and whether it is better than the belladonna-hyoscine group in controlling the disease and also without the disagreeable effects on the sight and dryness of the mouth.

Nocturnal Cramp

"M.D." writes in reply to the query by "Alpha" in the *Journal* of October 24th: I suffered similarly, and found that when the following routine was adopted the trouble disappeared. A substantial breakfast, about 8.30 to 9; a good meal about 1.30; a very light repast about 6.30; nothing between meals, and particularly avoid fruit and vegetables after 2 p.m.; on retiring at night a dry biscuit with a glass of hot milk or milk and water.

X-Ray Therapy in Breast Cancer

Dr. J. H. DOUGLAS WEBSTER writes in reply to the two main questions of "Retired I.M.S." (October 24th, p. 845) as to the risk and advisability of combining x-ray treatment with operation in breast cancer. (1) The risk is a minimal one. Sequels such as serious sepsis and cellulitis must be exceedingly rare: I have never seen these in a series of about 500 post-operative breast cases. Care must be taken with dosage when there is scar tension or after skin grafting, at least at first, as such tissues have a low vitality; but cellulitis after x-ray treatment must be much rarer than after operation. All medical examinations and treatments carry with them some risk; even vaccination, hypodermic medication, and the sphygmomanometer have had fatal results on occasion. The risks of therapeutic nihilism in malignant disease are much greater than those of established forms of treatment such as x rays. (2) X-ray treatment is advisable before or after operation in breast cancer with the hope that the risk of local recurrence may be reduced; a recurrent case, as a rule, has a much lessened chance of ultimate cure than a moderately advanced primary case; and the chance of local recurrence is perhaps an even risk for all patients in later Stage I and Stages II-III at operation. There is no means of estimating accurately the microscopical extent of the disease in any given case: there are probabilities, but no certainties, as to the chance of local recurrence. The surgical results of Halstead were 24 per cent. at five years recurrence-free; and many other reports are similar. Many results from the combined methods (especially pre-operative and post-operative) show that such groups have double the chance of five-year survival as compared with the results of surgery alone (see Webster, D., *British Medical Journal*, 1932, ii, 47; and Hutchison, R. G., *Surg., Gynecol. and Obstet.*, 1936, lxiii, 653). The operative results in early Stage I cases are naturally much superior to the total

surgical rates, and may be 75 to 80 per cent. The advisability of supplementary irradiation is most questioned for this earliest group; though here, too, it would seem to be indicated: (a) for some patients for the local effect, (b) for all patients for the general effect of suitable irradiation in preventing metastasis by altering the blood chemistry in responsive patients so as to be less favourable for neoplastic development, and by stimulating the defence mechanism of the reticulo-endothelial system (see Reding, R., *Le Cancer*, 1935, xii, 9). Hutchison (loc. cit.) shows from a number of statistical reports that the results of scientifically applied x-ray therapy appear to be superior to the results of surgery alone and to the combined method. The methods of radiotherapy are still developing. That such a conclusion should be reached already is significant, suggesting that in time it will be widely accepted.

Income Tax

Cessation of Employment—Expenses

"L. D. S." resigned a professional appointment on April 30th, 1936, and has had no income since. The Revenue authorities have now raised an additional charge, bringing the assessment for the year 1935-6 to the amount of the earnings for that year, and claims payment of the balance of tax unpaid on the original assessment plus the tax on the additional assessment. Is that correct?

** Yes; revision to the basis of the current year can be claimed by the Revenue for the year prior to that in which the appointment terminated. With regard to the expenses, where membership of a society is required as a condition of the employment the rule laid down in *Simpson v. Tate* does not apply, and "L. D. S." should press for the allowance of the subscription mentioned for 1935-6 and previous years.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Safety Glass for Motor Cars

Owners of motor cars first registered on or before January 1st, 1932, should note that under the regulations of the Ministry of Transport the glass in windscreens on front windows must be safety glass from January 1st, 1937. For the purpose of the regulations "safety glass" means glass so constructed or treated that if broken it does not fly into fragments capable of causing severe cuts.

Disclaimer

Mr. T. H. SPENCER TIZZARD (Bath) writes: I very much regret the publicity which has recently been given to my corneal graft by the lay press of this city, and I ask the courtesy of your columns to disclaim any responsibility in this matter.

"Tropical Therapeutics"

We are informed that copies of Colonel Chopra's *Handbook of Tropical Therapeutics*, reviewed in our last issue at page 867, may be obtained from H. K. Lewis and Co., Ltd., 136, Gower Street, W.C.1, at 40s., postage extra. Messrs. Lewis are the authorized agents for this book.

Corrigenda

Dr. W. J. HARRISON wishes to correct a typing error in his memorandum on traumatic stenosis of the trachea treated by skin grafting (*Journal*, October 24th, p. 811). The date of the operation was June 18th, 1935.

In the account of the Panel Conference Dinner (*Supplement*, October 31st, p. 236) Mr. Elliot Dickson is reported to have used the term "qualification of the predicate." The term used in logic and by Mr. Elliot Dickson is "quantification of the predicate."

We have to correct a slip in last week's *Journal*. At the end of the note on the origin and meaning of anatomical terms (p. 877) the name of Alexander Monro secundus was misspelt.

Vacancies

Notifications of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 66, 67, and 68 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 64 and 65.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 256.