

Medical News

Lord Horder has been appointed personal adviser to the Minister of Food, Lord Woolton, on medical aspects of food problems.

The annual general meeting of the Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases will be held at 11, Chandos Street, W., on Saturday, July 26, at 2.15 p.m. At 3 p.m. there will be a discussion on "The Present Trend of Incidence of Venereal Diseases in England and Wales and the Methods of Control," to be opened by Colonel L. W. Harrison, followed by Dr. Margaret Rorke, Lieut.-Colonel T. E. Osmond, Dr. Letitia Fairfield, Surgeon Commander D. Duncan, Surgeon Lieut. Genevieve Newcastle, and Wing-Commander J. M. Kilpatrick.

The National Council for Mental Hygiene has arranged a public meeting to be held at Manson House, Portland Place, W.1, on Thursday, July 31, at 5 p.m., when Mr. Kenneth Walker, F.R.C.S., will deliver an address on "The Need for a Positive Philosophy of Life," with Dr. H. Crichton-Miller in the chair.

With its issue of July 5 the *Pharmaceutical Journal* founded by Jacob Bell enters on the second century of its existence.

The Gunning Victoria Jubilee Prize, for the period 1936 to 1940, was presented at a meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh on July 7 to Sir James C. Irvine, D.Sc., F.R.S., Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of St. Andrews, for his distinguished contributions to organic chemistry. In making the presentation Prof. E. T. Whittaker, the President, said that the value of the contributions by Sir James Irvine had been recognized by the Royal Society of London, which had honoured him with the Davy Medal, and by the Chemical Society, which awarded him the Longstaff Medal in 1933.

The names of Dr. William Fraser Annand, consulting physician, and Dr. Harry Winter, resident surgical officer, Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital, and Dr. Noel Rowland Hutchinson Holmes, medical officer, Coventry A.R.P. Casualty Service, have been brought to notice for brave conduct in civil defence.

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.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES and LETTERS forwarded for publication are understood to be offered to the *British Medical Journal* alone unless the contrary be stated.

Authors desiring REPRINTS of their articles 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.

ADVERTISEMENTS should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager (hours 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Orders for copies of the *Journal* and subscriptions should be addressed to the Secretary.

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Income Tax

Fall in Practice Income

"DELTA" was called up in September, 1939, for the E.M.S., and has been assessed for the year to April 5, 1940, on (a) the basis of his practice profits for 1938-9 plus (b) his salary under the E.M.S. for the period September 2, 1939, to April 5, 1940. Is this correct?

*** Yes, but if "Delta's" aggregate earned income for 1939-40 is not more than four-fifths of his earned income as assessed for that year he is entitled to have the practice profits calculated on the basis of the actual year (Finance Act (No. 2) 1939, Section 11). Whether relief is obtainable in that way will of course depend on the amounts concerned.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Abdominal Symptoms after Opium

Mr. P. L. BLAKELY (Shanklin) writes: May I, as a pharmacist, ask if it is quite fair for Dr. Jas. Scott (June 21, p. 952) to suggest that all the blame for certain abdominal symptoms, which he describes, lies upon the shoulders of opium? Pulv. Dover, alias pulv. ipecac. co., is a partnership. One does not need to refer much to Prof. A. J. Clark's *Applied Pharmacology* to know that the crimes seem much more like those of ipecacuanha. We can probably acquit the potass. sulph. There is 10% of ipecacuanha in pulv. ipecac. co. as there is of opium. Ipecacuanha contains the irritant alkaloids of emetine and cephaeline. The 1/4-grain dose of morphine mentioned at the end of Dr. Scott's letter is equal to the morphine content of 2½ grains of opium or 25 grains of Dover's powder. Perhaps it would be presumptuous of me to point out that the actions of opium are not necessarily the same as those of 1/10 part of its weight of morphine owing to the presence in opium of several other alkaloids.

St. Columba's Hospital for Advanced Cases

Mr. NORMAN A. SPROTT, F.R.C.S., writes: Many of your readers may be glad to know of the services provided by this hospital. In peacetime most of the patients came from a few large general hospitals, eager to fill our beds as soon as they were available, and there was no reason to make the institution known to a wider public; but wartime conditions have lessened the demand on our beds from the usual sources, with the result that our waiting lists have sometimes been reduced to vanishing-point, and there have even been empty beds, particularly in the men's wards. I cannot help feeling that these beds could be filled many times over if more members of the profession were aware of their existence. St. Columba's Hospital (Swiss Cottage, London, N.W.3) was founded to serve the needs of incurable patients, many of them dying of malignant disease, during the last few months of their illness. It provides care rather than cure for those beyond the reach of operative or radiological treatment. Infectious and mental cases are not admitted. Patients are expected to contribute, according to their means, from two to five guineas a week, for which they receive medical and nursing attendance, drugs, and dressings. There are no extras. The hospital provides for a class of patients that cannot easily be nursed at home or yet afford to remain for long in a private nursing home, and for whom there is otherwise usually no alternative but a council hospital. St. Columba's stands in a large garden in South Hampstead, readily accessible from the West End of London, with an excellent bus and underground service. Considering the desperate nature of the cases admitted it is a remarkably happy place. Many medical practitioners and others visiting the hospital have been impressed by its peaceful, friendly atmosphere. There are no private rooms at St. Columba's, and it seems to me that these patients, once they appreciate the fact that cure is out of the question, are generally happier in a ward with others similarly afflicted than they would be in a private room at a nursing home or living at home with their relations. The hospital is interdenominational, and the spiritual needs of the patients are well cared for.

Recruitment for Nursing

Efforts to bridge the gap between the time girls leave school to when they are old enough to enter hospitals are referred to in a report issued by the Nursing Recruitment Centre. Although the Centre, financed by the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, has only been in existence just over a year, some 450 applications have been received from girls of 15 or 16 who would not normally be ready for hospital training for at least two years. The report states: "If the nursing register goes on growing at this rate of 5 or 6 a day, it will total over 1,000 names by the end of the year, and more than double that number by the end of next year." The Centre sends these candidates leaflets on nursing, lists of pre-nursing courses, and individual advice about the best means of bridging the gap. It aims at keeping in touch with them until they are old enough to apply for hospital training.

Disclaimer

Mr. A. H. McINDOE writes: I wish to make it clear that I was in no way responsible for the undesirable comments recently made in the Press in regard to myself and the Maxillo-facial Unit at East Grinstead. I have no knowledge of the writer, have given no interviews, and wish to dissociate myself completely from publicity of this type.

Corrigendum

We regret that the price of the seventh edition of *Methods of Treatment*, by Prof. Logan Clendening and Dr. E. H. Hashinger, was incorrectly given last week (p. 89) as 25s. net; this should have been 50s. net.