

of medical students is of little value to the average doctor and is an abuse of the students' time.

The Royal Colleges and Universities should appoint a revisory committee of professors of anatomy and interested clinicians. They would easily arrive at unanimity regarding the elimination of half the contents in the textbooks of anatomy. Surely that amount of reform represents an advance that is well worth while and is early needed. The ultimate goal will never be reached if we are daunted at the outset by lack of a smooth straight path all the way to it.—I am, etc.,

Bristol.

A. WILFRID ADAMS.

Arsenical Thrombocytopenic Purpura

SIR,—In the article on the above subject by Major S. M. Laird (March 21, p. 381) reference is made to our paper on capillary fragility (*Lancet*, 1940, 2, 155). We are reported as indicating that "vitamin P is more concerned than ascorbic acid in maintaining normal capillary resistance." Actually our work on the capillary fragility of normal students showed that the majority of cases with an increase of capillary fragility responded to the oral administration of vitamin C, and that those cases which did not respond to this treatment were entirely uninfluenced by the administration of vitamin P.—We are, etc.,

G. H. BELL.

S. LAZARUS.

H. N. MUNRO.

The University, Glasgow.

A Doctor's Dilemma

SIR,—With reference to your medico-legal note under the heading "A Doctor's Dilemma" (March 7, p. 343) may I record a parallel incident which might have resulted in much difficulty and distress.

I was called a year or two ago to attend an elderly man who was dying of cancer. His wife and daughters begged me not to tell him what was the matter and to hide from him that he was in imminent danger of dissolution. Very much against my judgment I concurred. So solicitous were they for his peace of mind that they also kept him in ignorance that some valuable property he owned in London had been entirely demolished by a bomb. They even went so far as to hope that he might pass peacefully away before quarter day, since he would quickly tumble to what had happened when his rents failed to come in. Luckily for everybody this event did not occur and he got to know about his loss while he was still perfectly clear in his mind. He sent for his will and altered it. Within a week he was dead. He had been a man of considerable wealth, and had left, in the original will, the valuable property to his wife and all the rest of his possessions to a charity.

I think it is almost always wrong to withhold from a dying patient the fact that he will not recover—opportunity nearly always occurs for the news to be gently broken to the patient.—I am, etc.,

Watlington, Oxford.

T. L. CRAWHALL.

Certificates of Fitness for Removal to Hospital

SIR,—For some considerable time past at each monthly meeting of the Joint Hospital Board the medical officer has submitted a report concerning the admission of cases of infectious disease, and the Board have been very much concerned to note the number of cases of patients dying within two or three days, in some cases within a few hours only of their admission to the hospital. This has occurred particularly among young children ranging from a few months to the age of about 10 years.

The matter has been taken up with the county medical officer of health, the regional medical officer of the Ministry of Health, and the medical officers of health of the constituent authorities. Representations were made to the Ministry calling attention to the matter and expressing the view that one of the main causes of the events referred to was delay in calling in the services of a medical practitioner, and it was thought that advice to parents should receive nation-wide publicity. It was accordingly suggested to the Ministry that this publicity should be given by means of a broadcast announcement, and the Board understands that such an announcement has, in fact, already been made.

Apart from this broadcast the Board felt that there should be some means by which the matter could be brought to the notice of all medical practitioners, and in the hope that the

medium of the medical press might be used with this object in view I was instructed to bring the circumstances to your notice.—I am, etc.,

J. J. R. DAY,

Clerk of the South-East Essex
Joint Hospital Board.

Brentwood.

The Services

Temp. Surg. Lieut. John Dennys Kidd, R.N.V.R., has been mentioned in dispatches.

CASUALTIES IN THE MEDICAL SERVICES

Surg. Lieut. SIDNEY LEWIS BINDERMAN, R.N.V.R., is reported "Missing, Presumed Killed" in H.M.S. *Vortigern*, which was sunk on March 15, and which he joined only a few days earlier. He was born on July 2, 1915, the son of Dr. and Mrs. Binderman of Brooklyn, New York, and graduated M.B., B.Chir. of the University of Cambridge last year. After working as casualty officer at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, he entered the R.N.V.R.

Missing.—Capt. A. H. R. Coombes, R.A.M.C.; Surg. Lieut. J. D. James, R.N.V.R.; Surg. Lieut. D. R. Syred, R.N.V.R.

DEATHS IN THE SERVICES

Surgeon Rear-Admiral Sir WILLIAM WENMOTH PRYN, K.B.E., C.B., R.N. (ret.), has died at Stoke Gabriel, Devonshire. He was born at Saltash on October 21, 1859, the son of W. Pryn, and was educated at Blundell's School, Tiverton, and at Guy's Hospital, where he took the gold medal for surgery in 1880. He qualified M.R.C.S. and L.S.A. in the same year, and took the D.P.H. in 1895. After filling the posts of house-surgeon and resident obstetrical officer at Guy's Hospital and assistant surgeon at the Royal Albert Hospital, Devonport, he entered the Royal Navy as surgeon in 1886, became staff surgeon in 1898, fleet surgeon in 1902, deputy surgeon general (now surgeon captain) in 1911, surgeon general (now surgeon rear-admiral) in 1916, and retired under the age limit in 1919. During his thirty-four years of service he had been a surgeon in H.M.S. *Orlando* in the Australian Station; staff surgeon in H.M.S. *Minerva* in the Training Squadron; medical officer at the R.N. College, Greenwich; assistant to the Medical Director-General, R.N., from 1906 to 1910; in charge of the naval hospital at Gibraltar from 1912 to 1916; and surgeon general in charge of the Royal Naval Hospital, Plymouth. He received the C.B. in 1918 and the K.B.E. in 1919. In 1891 he married Isabella Kate, daughter of Major J. Cotter of The Buffs, and had two sons, the elder of whom entered the R.A.M.C., and two daughters, both of whom married naval medical officers. He had been a member of the British Medical Association for fifty-six years.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The Linacre Lecture on "The Onset of Respiration at Birth" will be delivered by Sir Joseph Barcroft, F.R.S., emeritus professor of physiology, in St. John's College, on Wednesday, May 6, at 5 p.m.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

A week-end course for medical practitioners on factory medical services and industrial diseases (fee, £1 1s.) will be held at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (Keppel Street, Gower Street, W.C.) on Saturday and Sunday, April 18 and 19. On April 18, at 2 p.m., Dr. R. E. Lane will discuss "The Nature and Prevention of Toxic Risks," and at 3.30 p.m. Dr. M. W. Goldblatt will speak on "The Nature, Prevention, and Treatment of Occupational Skin Diseases." The following is the programme for April 19: 10.30 a.m., Dr. D. Stewart, "Factory Hygiene: Assessment of Standards and Methods of Investigation"; 12 noon, Mr. P. McG. Moffat, "Ophthalmology in Relation to Industrial Medicine"; 2 p.m., Dr. Joan E. Harwood, "Women in Industry: The Practical Problems arising and the Factors influencing Doctors' Views and Decisions"; 3.15 p.m., Mr. R. E. Tugman, "Protective Clothing and Appliances."

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

The following candidates have been approved at the examination indicated:

FINAL M.B., CH.B.—*Parts II and III*: *A. Stanworth, *†H. B. Stoner, E. A. Broomhead, T. E. Cleghorn, Mary Darlow, J. F. B. Edeson, H. Kelsey, †H. I. Le Brun, Gwenol Nicholson, J. H. Schofield, H. J. Towle.
*With first-class honours. †With distinction in medicine. ‡With distinction in therapeutics.