

surely cannot be disputed. It is only by educating—that is, by providing opportunities for the full psychosomatic development of each unique precious individual—that we can hope to achieve a community of positively healthy, self-respecting, intelligently co-operative citizens. Self-respect must be based on successful achievement, socially useful or creative in character. Schools must be such that every child can be good at school, and has to be dragged away from it. It is encouraging that Britain has apparently planned improvements in its educational provisions. It is surely the duty of the profession to foster and encourage those provisions, in the conviction that the teachers will make a greater contribution to the health of the community than can doctors as such.—I am, etc.,

JOHN DALE,

Medical Officer of Health.

Melbourne, Australia.

Lay versus Medical Administration

SIR,—Both Sir Frederick Menzies (Feb. 16, p. 251) and Dr. F. J. Bentley (March 2, p. 327) are looking at this matter from the point of view of the medical profession. Of course it is in the interests of doctors to have medical administration, which will always favour the medical man. From the wider point of view of the interests of the community there is not much doubt that lay administration is preferable for the following reasons:

(1) It is cheaper. (2) It is more likely to be efficient since the only consideration in choosing a lay administrator is his ability to administer, while in the case of doctors much more weight is apt to be attached to their professional qualifications than to their administrative ability. (3) Medical administration is so often, alas, the refuge of the incompetent who is neither a good doctor nor a good administrator. (4) Of the work at the central offices of a large National Health Service 99% will be clerical and executive. Medical work will be done in hospitals and clinics. It is a sheer waste for highly qualified medical men to spend their time and energies on clerical processes.

Sir Frederick Menzies is fundamentally wrong when he says that the problems to be dealt with in the new regional organizations are and will always be predominantly medical—they are not. The problems will be problems of administration, pure and simple, and will be precisely the same problems of administration as arise in any large organization. There will be ample scope for the doctor in the new National Health Service, first in his proper sphere—i.e., in the active practice of his profession of medicine—and secondly in an expert advisory capacity. But for Heaven's sake don't let him spill over into the sphere of clerical work and waste his special talents in a field where he is not at his best.—I am, etc.,

Epsom Downs.

C. E. NICOL.

Diuresis by Suggestion

SIR,—The doctrine of signatures has had many believers through the ages. In bygone days, or in other places, to eat the heart of a lion was to acquire the courage he was thought to possess; or, to jump to contemporary usages, I have sometimes thought that by the same token the viscid syrup of tolu is so commonly included in expectorant mixtures to "cut the phlegm" it resembles. But a more striking instance was recently recorded in your always interesting "Nova et Vetera," where the successful treatment of a case of dropsy by drinking water was described—the water cure. I suspect much was omitted, as is suggested by a case at present under my care. She is a lady of 85 who suddenly developed typical acute congestive heart failure with so much oedema of her legs and thighs that she could not move them. "Try to pass plenty of water," I said. "I can't," she replied. "But try," I urged; "I will help you with some medicine." I made up for her a weak aqueous solution of pot. brom. and pot. cit. which I did not flavour or colour. It must have tasted bad but it looked just like water. I relied on my supposed prescience as a registered medical practitioner. Anyhow it worked and a prodigious urination began. In a few days all the dropsy had gone and she could move her legs freely.

Some important details are omitted in the way the patient was handled, but I believe the happy re-establishment of her circulation was solely the result of suggestion—a strange process on which depends an immense amount of therapy, though often unconscious. How often does suggestion work? It seems to me that there can be only one way. The natural powers of

healing; the natural tendency to restoration after injury or impairment; the *vis medicatrix naturae*—somehow they are stimulated or even tricked into activity.—I am, etc.,

London, S.W.1.

E. GALLOP.

Motive in Medical Demobilization

SIR,—In his letter (March 9, p. 371) on "Motive in Medical Demobilization" Sir Ernest Graham-Little states that the Minister of Health will have "in the bag" some thousands of ex-Service doctors who have been subjected to continuous unilateral Socialist propaganda in which a State medical service has been a primary objective. As a doctor lately released from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve I have come in contact with many doctors in the Navy, and I have not met one who has been imbued with Socialist principles. I am happy to say that I neither saw nor heard of organized political propaganda within the Service. I am quite certain that the majority of demobilized doctors, who during their service have been drafted round the ends of the earth from pillar to post, are quite unfavourable to any form of State medical service as devised by the Socialist Party.—I am, etc.,

London, W.8.

W. D. G. TROUP.

Child Welfare in Singapore Internment Camp

SIR,—I read Miss Mary Thomas's letter (March 9, p. 371) with much interest, and thank her for her generous account of the work of the medical women in the Singapore internment camp. As she refers to a certain disagreement in the camp in which I took a large part, and as there is naturally no account of the case raised by my opponents, I ask you to allow me to state it.

The mothers of children interned in Changi Jail were in a peculiarly difficult position. An appallingly overcrowded jail is a bad home for a child, and the conduct of our children naturally deteriorated. The shortage of the necessities of life sometimes made their normal child-like activities disastrous. And there was added irritation in the fact that members of a family could not get out of sight and sound of each other. All the mothers were harassed, especially those with large families. The opposition to my proposal was that I was giving publicity to the failings of some sorely tried members of the camp.

May I add what I know Miss Thomas would endorse—that of the elect company of those whose conduct was an unfailing inspiration to the camp a goodly number were Eurasian women.—I am, etc.,

Witney.

PATRICIA R. ELLIOTT.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Dr. J. Crighton Bramwell, F.R.C.P., who will complete his period of appointment as professor of systematic medicine at the end of the present session, has accepted the invitation of Council of the University to become professor of cardiology from September next.

Dr. T. H. Oliver, F.R.C.P., whose period of appointment as professor of clinical medicine will be completed in September next, has accepted the Council's invitation to become professor of therapeutics from that date.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON

Dr. Maurice Campbell will deliver the Lumleian Lectures on Tuesday, April 16, and Thursday, April 18, at the College, Pall Mall East, S.W., at 5 p.m. Subject: "The Paroxysmal Tachycardias."

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH

On March 14 the Right Hon. Thomas Johnston, lately Secretary of State for Scotland, and the Right Hon. Florence Horsbrugh, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health 1939-45, received the Honorary Fellowship of the College. Diplomas of Honorary Fellowship were also conferred on Dr. Andrew Davidson, F.R.C.P.Ed., chief medical officer, Department of Health for Scotland; Mr. Eardley Holland, F.R.C.S., President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; Sir Edward Mellanby, M.D., F.R.S., secretary of the Medical Research Council; and Air Marshal Sir Harold Whittingham, Director-General, Medical Services, R.A.F. The President of the College, Mr. J. M. Graham, took the chair at the ceremony. Each of the recipients after being presented and given the diploma made a brief speech of thanks.