

Letters, Notes, and Answers.

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

STATIC ALBUMINURIA.

"F.R.C.P." asks for advice in treatment to cure static albuminuria. After searching many books he finds little to guide him. Of course, prolonged rest cures for the time, but patients cannot be kept indefinitely in bed.

SODIUM CHLORIDE.

"W. G." asks what the recent opinions of authorities are in relation to salt (sodium chloride) as an article of diet. I am aware, he writes, of Bunge's explanation of the natural desire for salt, but suspect that some present-day physiologists state that we eat too much salt. Does an excessive intake of salt cause any harmful condition in an otherwise healthy individual?

* * We have referred this question to our pharmacological adviser, who writes: I do not know of any evidence to show that a moderate excess of sodium chloride is unhealthy provided that the kidneys are normal. If the kidneys are diseased they often lose the power of excreting chlorides, and then excess of NaCl produces oedema. Excess of NaCl can produce oedema in infants, but this is not of any practical importance, as the amounts needed are larger than are likely to be taken. I do not know of any injurious effects that have been shown to follow the taking of large amounts of NaCl in the diet of normal individuals.

TREATMENT OF LIPOMATA.

DR. R. CLARK WAKEFIELD (Milly, Seine-et-Oise) writes in reply to Dr. A. Y. Massouda (Cairo):—In *Erichsen's Surgery*, eighth edition, we read: "It is true that we have the sanction of Sir B. Brodie's high authority for the administration of the liquor potassae in some cases, under which treatment this eminent surgeon states that fatty tumours have occasionally disappeared. I tried it on one case of a lipoma of the upper arm, left, size of an orange. It quite disappeared under 20-drop doses of liq. potassae in small tumbler of water three times a day. This patient declined any surgical help."

INCOME TAX.

Motor Car Replacement and Depreciation.

"J. McE." replaced a car in 1923; the new car cost £525, of which he was allowed to deduct, as a net expense of renewal, £320. In computing his assessment for (apparently) 1926-27 the inspector of taxes has cancelled the old allowance in so far as it affects the average and allowed 20 per cent. depreciation on the written-down value of the car, taking its original value at £320.

* * "J. McE." may be referred to the reply to A, B, and C in our issue of March 13th. In his case we are of opinion (1) that the Board of Inland Revenue is not likely to insist on the proposed partial cancellation of the renewal allowance, and (2) that his depreciation allowance for 1926-27 should be calculated as follows:

Original cost of car in 1923	£	525
Depreciation for 1924-25 at 20 per cent.	105	
	420	
Depreciation for 1925-26 at 20 per cent.	84	
	336	
Depreciation for 1926-27 at 20 per cent.	67	

Our correspondent should bear in mind that when he renews the present car he can claim, as an obsolescence allowance, the net cost of replacement less the depreciation allowances to which effect has been given.

Replacement of Car.

"J. A. S." has written to the Board of Inland Revenue, as suggested in our issue of February 27th, and has received in reply an intimation that while the matter is primarily one for the adjudication of the District Commissioners, the Board holds the view that the amount to be allowed "is the excess of the cost at the date of replacement of a car similar in type to the old car—so far as this may be ascertainable—over the price realized by the sale of the old car."

* * On this basis a fall in the general level of motor car prices results in an allowance which is insufficient to cover the original outlay on the car. Nevertheless, the view taken by the authorities is, in our opinion, one which the courts would not be likely to overrule, and consequently we cannot advise "J. A. S." to take the matter to appeal before the District Commissioners: the risk of ultimate expense is too heavy for the object sought. The matter would be of considerable general importance were it not for the alternative depreciation allowance which is now obtainable for cars; where the allowance is claimed in lieu of the cost of replacement the inequitable result of falling prices does not apply.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

CAUTION.

SOME inquiries have recently been received from members who have had begging letters from a Mrs. E. M. Etheridge, described as of Taunton. Members who receive further letters of the kind might, before giving assistance, be well advised to communicate with the secretary of the Charity Organization Society, Denison House, 296, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W.1.

A DISCLAIMER.

DR. G. MURRAY LEVICK (London, W.) writes: I have received cuttings from certain lay newspapers in which reference is made to "research work" carried out at the British Humane Association Artificial Light Clinic at Westminster in connexion with the treatment of infantile mental deficiency. Will you allow me, through the medium of the **BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL**, to disclaim all knowledge of and responsibility for such statements? No such research work has taken place at the clinic, of which I am in honorary medical charge.

WASTE OF COAL AND LOSS OF HEALTH.

"A. Y." writes: I consider that your article in the JOURNAL of March 20th (p. 537) is a masterly exposition on the madness of the present system of using coal in this country. If some such paragraph could be published in every newspaper in the country with the authority of the British Medical Association behind it, in order to rouse public opinion, so that determined action may be taken, then the whole outlook for the trade and prosperity of this country will be changed.

THE BATHS OF SALSOMAGGIORE.

PROFESSOR C. CATTANEO contributes to the *Salsomaggiore Terme* for November-December, 1925, a discussion of the value of the waters of Salsomaggiore in certain conditions. He reports that among some 10,000 patients treated there 26 per cent. were cured, 65 per cent. were definitely benefited, and 9 per cent. remained without improvement. The greatest advantage was derived by patients with tertiary syphilis, in whom 43 per cent. of cures was reported, all the remaining patients showing some improvement. In bone and joint tuberculosis 42 per cent. of the cases were cured, 50 per cent. improved, and 8 per cent. were unaffected. The proportion of cures in various other groups of disease is given as follows: skin diseases, 40 per cent.; anaemias, 37 per cent.; neuritis, including sciatica, 34 per cent.; sequelae of wounds and the menopause, 33 per cent.; chronic non-tuberculous conditions of the respiratory tract, 32 per cent.; sequelae of pleurisy and peritonitis, 31 per cent.; and rhino-pharyngitis, laryngitis, and otitis, 30 per cent. No cures were obtained in diseases of the veins and lymphatics, but improvement was shown by most patients. In disordered metabolism and uricaemic arthritis there was 73 per cent. improvement. Professor Cattaneo concludes that, although the waters of Salsomaggiore cannot be considered a panacea, yet their therapeutic action is considerable in a large number of conditions. He believes that a still higher percentage of cures would be obtained if repeated courses of treatment were undertaken by those who derive benefit from a single course.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 39, 42, and 43 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 40 and 41.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 112.