

Letters, Notes, and Answers.

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

UTERINE FIBROIDS.

"W. H. M." asks where he can find a history of uterine fibroids.

"* * We have referred this question to Dr. Herbert Spencer, who has been good enough to reply as follows:

"Fibroid" is a modern word for a tumour which may be a *myoma*, a *fibroma*, or, more usually, a *fibromyoma*. The German word is *myom* and the French *fibrome*. In all three languages the word is often applied inaccurately from the pathological point of view. The ancient writers used the word *scirrhus* for a uterine fibroid. Your correspondent will find many references to this tumour in Spach's *Gynaecia* (1597); for example, Hieronymus Mercurialis (Cap. XIX) divides *scirrhus uteri* into two varieties, one of which (*legitimus*) is a "fibroid," the other (*spurius*) is due to inflammation. "And the signs of these *scirrhi* are these: For if the disease is situated in the fundus of the uterus, the uterus will always incline towards that part, where there will appear a tumour with hardness; and sometimes pain will be present (to wit, in the spurious form), and sometimes there will be no pain (in the genuine form)." Mercurialis refers to Soranus, Paulus Aegineta, Moschion, and Avicenna.

INCOME TAX.

Motor Car: Improvement.

"H. G. P." replaced his touring car by a saloon of the same make. The local inspector refuses to allow more than the net cost of replacing the old tourer with a car of similar make and design.

"* * The inspector's attitude is technically correct. The Income Tax Acts do not permit of the deduction of expenditure of a capital nature, and no allowance can therefore be claimed for outlay on improvement of the professional equipment.

Motor Car Depreciation, etc.

"B" has been supplied with detailed figures showing the alterations which the local inspector of taxes claims to make in the computation of the replacement allowances of the years entering into the average for 1925-26 and 1926-27 if "B" claims the depreciation allowances, on the ground that replacements and wear and tear allowances cannot be claimed concurrently.

"* * We were under the impression that the Board of Inland Revenue had conceded the point that the "replacement" adjustment need not be made as regards the computations of profits for years prior to 1925—perhaps "B" can induce his local inspector of taxes to ask for specific advice from his headquarters on that point. There is, however, another side to the matter; in making a calculation of the "obsolescence" allowance (which it is agreed can be made concurrently with the depreciation allowance) the inspector has apparently deducted sums representing the annual wear and tear in the years when no depreciation allowance was legally due. That course is correct if the object is to arrive at the appropriate wear and tear for any particular year, but is incorrect if applied to an obsolescence claim. That claim is governed by Rule 6 (7) of the rules applying to Cases I

and II, Schedule D, and provides for the deduction of "the total allowances which have at any time been made . . . on account of the wear and tear." As no such allowances "have . . . been made," no such sums should be deducted, and on that basis it will, no doubt, be found that the old figures representing the years' profits will remain substantially unaltered.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

A RISK OF YELLOW MERCURIC OXIDE OINTMENT.

"A. S. G." writes to warn practitioners against ordering the application of yellow oxide of mercury ointment to the eyelids of patients suffering from blepharitis who happen at the same time to be taking iodine in any form. My personal experience, he writes, is that the ointment is thus rendered highly irritating, so that it may cause very intense discomfort. A week after leaving off the ingestion of iodine I found it possible to apply the ointment without setting up acute irritation, but even then it was not altogether anodyne, showing, I take it, that traces of iodine were still present in the humours. This reminds me to say that the smarting caused by instillations of solutions of zinc or copper sulphate in collyria can in great measure be avoided by using a saturated solution of potassium chlorate instead of pure water as the vehicle.

THE TIME MOST FAVOURABLE TO IMPREGNATION.

G. A. F. (Nottingham) writes: I note, in the case published under the heading "Impregnatio mulieris artificiosa," in the **JOURNAL** of April 10th (p. 682), that the times chosen for the attempts were immediately before and after the catamenia. This corresponds with the common Gentile belief as to the most favourable time for impregnation, but is contrary to the Jewish rules as recorded in Leviticus (chapters xii and xv). At one time I had charge of many Jewish patients, and questioned a rabbi as to the reason for the lower rate of mortality among Jewish infants. He ascribed it largely to the observance of the Mosaic regulation of continence not only for the seven (or more) days of the actual catamenial period but also for seven days after. I am accustomed to instruct my patients that the time which gives the best chance to the child that is to be is during the third week of the menstrual cycle, counting from the first day of the menstrual week. Obviously the menstrual week is unsuitable; the following week the mucosa is immature, the third week it is mature, and the fourth or pre-menstrual week it is degenerating ready for its decidualation.

POSTURE IN HEALTH AND DISEASE.

MR. F. MATTHIAS ALEXANDER writes: I have read the article in your issue of April 17th (p. 690) on "Posture as a factor in health and disease," by Dr. Maud F. Forrester-Brown, and for the benefit of all interested in this subject I wish to draw attention to her statement that "as Dr. Goldthwait points out, the development of force in a particular muscle or muscle group is of little value; what is important is to teach co-ordination." I find that the instructions given in the series of corrective exercises "designed by Dr. Goldthwait" quoted in the article are not in keeping with the principles and procedures involved in the teaching of co-ordination. Take, for instance, the one headed (2) stretching lateral abdominal muscles:—"First movement: Slowly shrug up one shoulder, etc.; second stage: slowly relax, if possible, leaving the ribs up, while the shoulder sinks down, etc." No subconsciously controlled person could carry out such instructions without increasing the malco-ordination and maladjustment already present.

THE USES OF VACCINES.

DR. M. W. BROWDY (London) writes: Professor Ledingham's lecture and your comments in the **BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL** of May 8th and 15th are worthy of serious attention. Specific vaccine therapy is a misnomer. In the *Lancet* (April 28th, 1923) I recorded results obtained in the treatment of gonorrhoea by a non-specific protein, surpassing those resulting from the use of specific vaccines, and suggested (*Therapeutic Gazette*, November 15th, 1923) that any benefit that accrued from detoxicated vaccines was due to the greater amount of protein they contained. The action of non-specific proteins is not thoroughly understood, but the results obtained from their use in many conditions is very disturbing to the treasured theories of specific vaccine therapy. In parasyphilis and "Wassermann-fast" cases a combination of protein therapy and arsenobenzols often gives satisfactory results, irrespective of the source of the protein used.

A SIMPLE MODIFICATION OF THE MIDWIFERY FORCEPS.

Correction.

IN Dr. J. Haig Ferguson's paper, published in the **JOURNAL** of May 22nd, for "lacets" (p. 860, col. 2, last paragraph, and p. 862, second last paragraph of the paper) read "lacs."

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 33, 34, 35, 38, and 39 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 36 and 37.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 195.