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*Including an Epitome of Current Medical Literature
WITH SUPPLEMENT.*

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* * "E. H." can deduct the whole cost of rent, rates, light, and heat as a professional expense, but not, of course, any expense borne by the caretaker in keeping the premises clean.

Car Replacement and Basis of Assessment.

"R. P." bought car A in June, 1925, for £140 and sold it in May, 1926, for £90, buying car B for £125; he commenced practice as a consulting physician on his own account in October, 1924; can he claim the benefit of the three years' average?

* * He should claim, as an expense of the year 1926-27, £125-£90=£35 obsolescence allowance, and for the year 1927-28 a depreciation allowance of 20 per cent. of £125—that is, £25. The assessment for the period October, 1924, to April, 1925, should be on the basis of the actual earnings, for the year to April 5th, 1926, on the earnings of his first year, for 1926-27 on the average of the earnings of his first two years, and for 1927-28, when the average basis disappears, on the basis of the earnings of 1926-27.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

DEATH BY LIGHTNING STROKE.

DR. ESPINE F. WARD, of the West African Medical Staff, sends particulars of the death from lightning on November 24th, 1926, of fourteen native women, whose ages ranged between 15 and 35. Some four hours after the accident he found the women lying dead in the village market place under a light shelter, which consisted of a few uprights supporting a galvanized iron roof 5 ft. 6 in. high. One other woman, who showed signs of life but was unconscious, was transferred to hospital twelve miles away, and subsequently made a good recovery. She left hospital twenty-four hours later of her own accord, complaining, however, of pains in her legs, giddiness, and difficulty in walking, but was unwilling to remain longer under treatment. Two other women, who had also been of the party, had already recovered, and were apparently none the worse, except for vague general pains.

Dr. Ward writes: "I was told that one of the dead women had had her six months old baby strapped on her back; after her death the baby had been rescued by friends and was none the worse for the ordeal, but I did not see the baby nor could I get any further particulars about it. The light shelter was about 12 ft. square and the women had been seated in a circle on the ground, looking inwards. All the bodies were found lying on their backs, evidently having fallen backwards after the shock, their feet pointing inwards. The position of the bodies was very much the same in all cases, although one or two had evidently fallen against one another when killed and lay across each other. In all cases the pupils were widely dilated and rigor mortis had set in; the clothes of all were wet, but showed no signs of injury, and the ground around was soaked by rain, the women lying in puddles of water. There were no signs of burning or of any injuries on the bodies, and although all of them had sums of money in coin tied in their waistbands, the coins were not affected. Five of them had frothed at the mouth; in several cases the hands were clenched and the arms flexed. No post-mortem examinations were made. I was informed that heavy rain had fallen during the afternoon; it was not possible to say whether the lightning occurred during the rainstorm or preceded it. When the women were seen to be apparently dead the people in the market all ran away; some returned later, and it was then seen that the two women were recovering. They were then unable to walk and were carried away by their friends. Nothing was done for the rest, although it transpired that one had shown signs of life. I think it is highly probable that many others might have been saved also if first aid had been available sooner, but, left as they were in their wet clothes on the wet ground, the opportunity had passed. The market is on laterite soil, about seventy yards square, covered with little shelters and with many trees scattered about; it probably contained some three hundred people at the time of the accident. No trees were more than 30 ft. high. Neither the shelter itself nor any of the trees showed any signs of having been struck. The bodies were removed to the mortuary in a motor lorry. The driver refused to drive the lorry, as there was a prevalent belief that anyone removing the bodies before the 'juju' had been appeased by a ceremony of purification by the 'thunder women' would die within a week. However, the European manager of the local transport company drove the bodies to the mortuary, in spite of the warnings he also received. Three days later he was admitted to the European hospital at Accra and died on the Tuesday evening following from yellow fever, after three days' illness. This strange coincidence admits of only one explanation to the native mind.

"It is difficult (Dr. Ward adds) to advance any theory how the electrical discharge caused these fatalities, because the natives were very reluctant to give information of what they regarded as a powerful 'juju' (afterwards so unfortunately confirmed in their minds by the death of the driver). The whole circum-

stances provide another instance of the peculiarity of lightning, and I suggest that in this case these fatalities were due to the people forming the opposite pole of a condenser to the corrugated iron, which had become highly charged by induction before the storm broke; they thus provided paths for the current. These particulars are given with the kind permission of the Director of the Medical and Sanitary Services."

THE OPERATION OF TONSILLECTOMY.

DR. PATRICK LEIGHTON (Nottingham) writes: I have read with much interest the letters recently published on ambidextrous enucleation of tonsils with the guillotine.

For years, in over 2,000 cases, I had used both hands, using the forefinger of one to push the tonsil through the ring, but after accidentally buttonholing the palate and removing the skin of the end of my own finger, it occurred to me to use the thumb, with far better results. The reason was that the thumb, being larger, did not penetrate the ring. The anaesthetist should be armed with a swab on a sponge forceps, which is pressed into the cavity for a few seconds the moment the tonsil is removed. In this way a clear view of the other tonsil is obtained. A Sluder Ballenger guillotine No. 1, made by Gardner of Edinburgh, gives me every satisfaction.

The above remarks refer to ethyl chloride anaesthesia, when the complete operation should take about 25 seconds. I agree with Mr. H. L. Whale that both hands should be used in the dissection operation.

SMALL-POX AND VACCINATION.

LIEUT.-COLONEL A. BUCHANAN, M.D., I.M.S.(ret.) (St. Jacques, Guernsey), in the course of a communication on this subject, writes: When a bad attorney has a weak case he sometimes sets up a false issue, and then proceeds to "knock the bottom out of it." In a similar way Dr. Killick Millard shows (JOURNAL, February 12th, p. 306) that the occurrence of 6,000 cases with 500 deaths—I am giving round figures—in a city where 98 per cent. of the population had been vaccinated is a proof of the unreliability of infant vaccination to protect the community. But no one has, as far as I am aware, asserted that infant vaccination affords lifelong protection. Dr. Millard himself stated in the same paragraph that it has been conclusively proved, over and over again, that vaccination confers temporary protection upon the individual. It follows that if all individuals in a city were vaccinated and revaccinated the community would be protected. Professor Wynne had shown (February 5th, p. 261) that the great majority of those who had been attacked, although "officially vaccinated," were actually unprotected by vaccination. Professor Wynne pointed out that "modern measures" had failed, and Dr. Millard thinks that it is a little too early to abandon hope, for he finds that in three weeks in January there were not more than 277 cases of small-pox in Sheffield. It would be interesting to know how many cases would have to occur before Dr. Millard would resort to the method of protection which he admits has been conclusively proved, over and over again, to confer temporary protection.

A WARNING.

DR. C. B. MOSS-BLUNDELL (county medical officer of health, Huntingdon) writes: It is reported to me that a man who may give the name of Dr. Winter has been calling on professional men, particularly doctors and accountants, soliciting help. He may describe himself as an accountant and may say that he is an old Rugby and Oxford man, and has acquired a certain amount of information about these two places. He suffers from pulmonary tuberculosis and may state that he has been at Yardley Road, Lenham, or Papworth Sanatorium, the latter statements being true. He has lately been "working" the Oxford-Slough area. He is about 33, height 5 ft. 5 in., of spare build, with bushy eyebrows, and rather penetrating downcast eyes. When he left this district he was dressed in a dark grey suit and Trilby hat. I should advise doctors to take necessary precautions should he call on them.

SPINAL ENDOTHELIOMA.

MR. J. R. LEARMONTH (Glasgow) writes with reference to the note on his paper on spinal endothelioma, published in our issue last week (p. 768), to state that "the work on the transplantation of the cerebral vesicles of *Amblystoma punctatum*, to which you refer in your notice of my paper on spinal leptomeningioma, was carried out, not by Harrison, but by Professor S. C. Harvey and Dr. H. S. Burr of Yale University (vide *Arch. Neurol. and Psychiat.*, 1925)."

A CORRECTION.

IN Mr. Duncan C. L. Fitzwilliams's article on page 758 of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL the last word in the second paragraph should have been "iodide," and not "iodine."

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 37, 38, 39, 43, 41, 44, and 45 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 42 and 43.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the Supplement at page 187.

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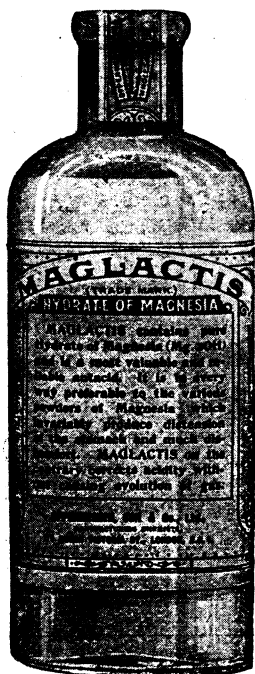
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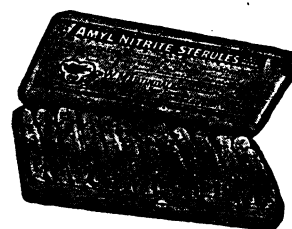
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