

Letters, Notes, and Answers.

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

ACUTE GOUT.

"HON. SEC." asks for information about any modern treatment likely to be useful in a case of acute gout, in which all the old remedies have been tried and failed.

WANTED—A HOME.

"MEMBER OF THIRTY YEARS' STANDING" would be glad to hear of a home in pleasant surroundings, where an old lady could be placed voluntarily for moderate payment, in some such place as Bournemouth.

CRAMP AFTER SCIATICA.

"K." asks for suggestions for the cure or mitigation of cramp in the leg following an attack of sciatica. The trouble is mainly at night, and causes loss of sleep. It appears to be increased by any exercise.

DURATION OF A POSITIVE WIDAL REACTION AFTER INOCULATION.

DR. M. AVENT (Basingstoke) asks how long the effect of inoculation with T.A.B. remains as regards agglutination powers of the serum of the person inoculated. One or two bacteriologists hedged, but implied only two or three years. He has recently seen a case which was diagnosed as being typhoid fever largely on the strength of a Widal reaction, which the bacteriologist reported as "strongly positive to *B. typhosus* and negative to *B. paratyphosus* A and B." The man had been inoculated with T.A.B. over ten years previously. The diagnosis was eventually settled as splenic anaemia.

PRIMULA RASH.

DR. FRANCIS G. BENNETT (Bournemouth) writes: For some time I have been attending a patient for a rash on the hands due to handling the above-named plant. Applications of various kinds have answered for a time, but the rash still continues to appear at intervals. This obtained also with respect to the ultra-violet rays, which were given a good trial. I should be grateful for any suggestions as to treatment, as both the reappearance of the rash and the irritation which accompanies it are becoming distressful to the patient.

* * We have referred this inquiry to Dr. H. Haldin-Davis, who writes: The first point in the treatment of this case is to ensure that the patient never, on any account, handles a *primula* at all. Unless this precaution has been taken (and Dr. Bennett does not make it quite clear that it has), no treatment is likely to be successful. If, however, the rash remains obstinate, even although care has been taken that there should be no renewal of the harmful contact, one must suppose that the patient is so sensitive that the original dermatitis has developed into a true eczema—a contingency by no means improbable; the tendency of eczema to relapse is notorious. It is difficult to give explicit directions without seeing the patient, but the keynote of the treatment should be protection, as complete as possible, from external irritants of every kind, however slight.

INCOME TAX.

Schedule B: Purchase of Practice.

"L. C." asks whether he is correctly assessed in respect of a meadow under both Schedule A and Schedule B, and also as to the position arising out of the purchase of the remaining

half share in the practice from his former partner as from December 31st, 1927. During the quarter ending April 5th, 1928, he will be paying an assistant at the rate of £400 per annum inclusive.

* * The tax is payable under both Schedule A and Schedule B. Our correspondent is not entitled to deduct the expense of the employment of the assistant from the share of the 1927-28 assessment relating to the last quarter. The only relief open to him is to claim under Rule 11 to have the proportion of the assessment applicable to the final quarter reduced to the amount of the profits of the practice for that period. In computing those profits he would, of course, deduct as an expense of the practice the £100 payable to the assistant for that quarter.

Motor Car Obsolescence.

"C. A. R. M." bought a car for £295 in September, 1925, which he sold in September, 1927, for £150, buying another car for £255. Depreciation has been allowed, but the claim for obsolescence (presumably on £145 less £40 depreciation—that is, £105) has been refused on the ground that the 1925 car was not "obsolete."

* * Apparently the inspector of taxes is relying on the case of the South Metropolitan Gas Company v. Dadd, which was decided by Mr. Justice Rowlatt last November. The decision went in favour of the Crown on the ground that the question was one of fact, and that the Court therefore could not interfere. But the judge went out of his way to say that this case was not to be taken as deciding that in order to be obsolete a thing must be "worn out," and suggested that in that particular case the Commissioners against whose decision the appeal was made had in mind the probability that the appellant company "wanted something rather better . . . because it would suit their purpose better." The case quoted dealt with the replacement of a seven-year-old ship. It is clear that the life of a medical practitioner's car is normally so much shorter than that of a ship that there is *prima facie* less ground for attacking a claim for a two-year-old car than for a seven-year-old ship. Further, there can be no suggestion that our correspondent was buying the new car for any other reason than that the old one had become unsuitable by age and use for the purpose for which it was required. If the inspector of taxes remains obdurate on the merits of the claim—and even if the legal merits are arguable the equitable merits are not open to dispute—we suggest that a full statement of the facts be sent to the Secretary, Inland Revenue, Somerset House, W.C.2, with a request for an official ruling. In that event we should be glad to see a copy of the reply.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

A MEDICAL MAN-OF-ALL-WORK.

DR. WILFRED WATKINS-PITCHFORD (Bridgnorth) sends us the following curious advertisement, copied from the *Bath Chronicle*, which may be found in the *Hereford Journal* for March 27th, 1777:

"Wanted for a family who have had health—a sober steady person in the capacity of doctor, surgeon, apothecary and manmidwife. He must occasionally act in the cap. of butler, dress hair and wigs. He will be required to read prayers occasionally and a sermon every Sunday evening. A good salary will be given. N.B.—He will have liberty to turn a penny in any branch of his profession when not wanted in the family."

Perhaps (our correspondent adds) the omission of the usual qualification before "penny" is indicative of delicate politeness.

A BEGGING LETTER PEST.

IN our issue of August 13th last we warned our readers that a begging letter expert was operating from Cardiff—a woman who appealed for loans to help her father, described as a former medical student. This woman is still sending out her appeals on much the same lines, and we hear from the Chief Constable of Cardiff that the person concerned, who is still living in Cardiff, has already been convicted for obtaining charitable contributions by false pretences. It is to be hoped that medical men, who seem to be chosen as a specially favourable prey, will be on their guard.

THE WHITE LINE.

THE Automobile Association informs us that the police authorities in certain districts are understood to have determined to prosecute in cases where motorists fail to keep to the white lines on roads. It therefore behoves every motorist when approaching corners and round junctions to look out for the white lines and keep well within them.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 46, 47, 50, 51, and 52 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 48 and 49.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 83.