

## Letters, Notes, and Answers.

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### QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

#### CRAMP AFTER SCIATICA.

"V." writes in reply to "K." (*JOURNAL*, March 10th, p. 430): For two years after sciatica I have suffered from cramps of the peronei and flexor muscles of calf and thigh at night, and I find the best way to escape them is to avoid lying on my back; a hot-water bottle to the muscle is a preventive also, but the most certain way is to avoid any pressure on the buttocks. When the cramp comes on get out of bed and extend the cramped muscle to its furthest, and knead it well and hard with the fingers till it softens; exercise seems to do it good.

#### CAESAREAN SECTION IN PREGNANCY COMPLICATED BY PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS.

**DR. S. L. B. WILKS** (Colwyn Bay) asks whether Caesarean section has ever been employed in preference to allowing natural labour to ensue in a case of pregnancy complicated by pulmonary tuberculosis. He suggests that for a primagravida with fairly extensive physical signs, low blood pressure, and much sputum, but otherwise an apparently favourable case, natural labour, even assisted by morphine and hyoscine, is likely to involve considerably more exertion and general disturbance than would an open operation, which would take only a few minutes.

#### A METHOD OF MAKING A BLOOD FILM.

**SURGEON COMMANDER F. COCK**, replying to an inquiry about the question of the importance of the thickness of the slides used in his method of making a blood film (*BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, February 25th, 1928, p. 306) writes: As this thickness varies so does the distance of the glass surfaces between which the film is made. The difference of thickness met with in the ordinary 1 in. and 3 in. slides will make very little alteration in the results obtained by the method I have, so far, described. As regards the working distance between the glass surfaces, this is one modification which has been tried: I find as the distance decreases so the characters of the film alter, and a stage is reached when precautions must be taken to prevent the blood spreading by capillary attraction, and the two glass slides coming in contact with one another. The change in the film referred to previously is left for others to observe; there are many modifications which may be worthy of a trial.

#### PHYSIOLOGY OF DEFAECATION.

**DR. REGINALD J. HANBURY** (Woldingham, Surrey) writes: For many years Messrs. Shanks and Co., Ltd., 81, New Bond Street, W.1, have supplied a good type of water-closet answering physiological requirements, in that the seat is low and slopes backwards. This is known as the "remirol" pattern, the heights at front and back of the pan being 13½ in. and 12½ in. respectively. Few who have tried closets of this type would ever wish to revert to the ordinary patterns, as the comfort and efficiency of the position are markedly superior. When renewals are required or closets put into new buildings I always install this type.

#### WINTER MOTORING.

**DR. E. F. BEBBINGTON** (Bury, Lancs), in reply to "Canadian's" inquiry (*JOURNAL*, December 31st, 1927, p. 1250) for a good radiator heating lamp, writes: I have a small paraffin lamp, made on the principle of the miner's safety lamp, which cost 9s. only and is very effective. The full name is the "Viking" safety radiator lamp, and it is obtainable from Lewis's Ltd., Market Street, Manchester, and Ranelagh Street, Liverpool.

#### INCOME TAX.

##### Motor Car Replacement and Renewals.

"M. T." bought a car for £250 in 1924; if he sells now for £20 and buys a second-hand car for £100, what can he claim? Further, if in a future year he purchases a new car for, say, £250, can he bring the original expenditure of £250 into the computation to ensure full relief? Should depreciation be claimed?

\*.\* (1) The out-of-pocket expenditure is the maximum amount of the claim—that is, £100—£20=£80. (2) In our opinion "Yes," but "M. T." might experience some difficulty in establishing his point. We suggest that he should approach the Inspector of taxes at once for a depreciation allowance for 1927-28—to be effected against the July instalment of tax—on the written-down value of the original car—for example, at 15 per cent. on £180=£27; then for 1928-29 he should claim obsolescence allowance—that is, £80—and for 1929-30 depreciation on the unexhausted car value—that is, £180—£27=£153. In our opinion it is advisable to claim depreciation; in most circumstances it is a case of a bird in the hand and another one in the bush.

##### Locumtenent's Expenses.

"W. A. H." asks what expenses can a locumtenent deduct in making his income tax return—for example, can he claim an allowance for railway and taxi fares?

\*.\* The point is open to some doubt, and is, in fact, a not infrequent cause of dispute. In our opinion, if a medical man is carrying on his profession by taking a series of short engagements as a locumtenent, then he is chargeable under Schedule D in respect of professional profits, and can deduct the travelling expenses, agents' fees, etc., he actually incurs in order to keep in practice in that particular way. If, on the other hand, he is taking a long-term appointment which amounts in effect to an assistantship, then we fear it must be admitted that he is chargeable under Schedule E in respect of the earnings of that particular appointment as a separate unit for assessment. In such a case he can deduct only the expenses incurred wholly, exclusively, and necessarily in performing the duties of that appointment, and not travelling or other expenses incurred anterior to the performance of that work.

### LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

#### PAINLESS FIRST LABOUR.

**DR. F. J. ALLEN** (Cambridge) writes: A lady who had been married several years conceived for the first time when well over 30. At about full term she awoke in the night with a desire to defaecate, and went to the w.c., but, on straining, she found that she was expelling the child. With some difficulty her husband got her back to bed and then fetched me. On arrival I found the child in the bed and the mother amused at the catastrophe. She said she had had no pain, and would not mind going through the whole business again straight away. She made a normal recovery; but the child, a male of normal size and appearance, had some respiratory defect, and in spite of strenuous efforts on my part to induce it to continue breathing, it would not respond, but died of asphyxia within an hour or two. I had a suspicion that, owing to the abnormal circumstances of its birth, it had drawn the liquor amnii into the lungs.

#### SEVERE ANAPHYLAXIS.

"M.D., D.P.H." writes: A few days ago I saw a boy, aged 10, who had had a sore throat for a day. A membranous exudate was present on both tonsils, so I decided to administer antidiptheral serum. Desensitization was unnecessary, as there was no history of allergic disease, and serum had never been given previously. I injected 12,000 units of serum subcutaneously, and scarcely had the needle been withdrawn when the boy had an attack of intense dyspnoea with marked flushing of his face. Within three minutes from the time the serum was administered a profuse urticarial eruption had covered the entire trunk and limbs. Fortunately I had a bottle of adrenaline (1-1,000) in my bag, and gave 5 minims of this solution hypodermically. The anaphylactic symptoms disappeared almost as rapidly as they had commenced, and the patient's condition was normal within ten minutes. Subsequent inquiries elicited the fact that the boy occasionally "awoke through the night and commenced to crow."

**MESSRS. C. J. HEWLETT AND SON, LTD.**, Charlotte Street, E.C.2, have introduced the "Charlotte" hot-water bottle cover, for which it is claimed that, as the stopper is completely enclosed when the cover is fastened, there is no danger of scalding. The bottle can be easily filled without the cover being removed.

#### 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, and 51 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 91.