

Letters, Notes, and Answers.

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

FLEA INFESTATION.

"**PULEX**," since moving into an expensive modern flat (one in a "converted" group), has been flea-tortured; skin irritation and insomnia are becoming habitual. Scrupulous hygiene, antiseptic soaps and lotions, and insect powder are unavailing. The fleas seem to breed in and under the flooring, which is old, with many deep cracks. Advice is asked regarding prophylaxis and actual treatment of the floors.

TREATMENT OF TACHYCARDIA.

DR. F. J. ALLEN (Cambridge) writes: Calcium lactate, 15 grains per diem, has almost completely banished this trouble in my case, although it had existed about twenty-eight years. Digitalis increased the trouble; possibly it confirms the habit in some cases of so-called "functional" tachycardia, and renders it incurable. If used at all, it should be tried at first in very small doses, after giving calcium lactate a fair trial.

INCOME TAX.

Loss on Subletting a House.

"**L. G. S.**" took a lease of some premises in 1921 with a view to entering into partnership with a practitioner in the town. The partnership negotiations fell through, and he was unable to sublet the house, except for a smaller rent than he has to pay. He is now in practice elsewhere; can he claim any allowance for the amount of the annual loss in rent?

* * The loss does not arise in the carrying on of his present practice, and we see no ground on which he can legally claim any allowance. In a recent case it has been held that profits from letting unfurnished property cannot be brought into taxation except under Schedule A, and the same principle would apply to losses. Schedule A contains no provision for giving relief in such a case as this.

THE ETERNAL COLD QUESTION.

"**TIMOCLES**" writes from Australia: There is just a chance that "H. H.," who complains of great liability to catch colds during the winter (January 18th, p. 135), may owe part of his trouble to hypersensitiveness to some dust. For some years I have investigated and treated large numbers of patients suffering from asthma, hay fever, and vasomotor rhinitis. In more than half of these I have been able to detect definite hypersensitiveness to some pollen, epithelium, or dust, and, as a rule, desensitization has greatly improved their symptoms. But I have been struck by the way in which many volunteer the information that since desensitization they have been free from colds, whereas many stated that before treatment the slightest draught was a menace to them. This improvement is not due to suggestion, because I never promised anything in this direction, and was, in fact, surprised to hear of it. Of course, in the case of "H. H." it is very unlikely that it is a factor, but as he says he would like to explore every hopeful avenue, I offer it for what it is worth. I would suggest testing with house dust from his own bedroom, feathers, horse hair, dog hair, cat hair, orris root, kapok, linseed, and a few likely grass pollens, especially timothy rye and plantain. It is essential to use good reagents for tests. Occasionally some particular food seems to be responsible. If any of these give definite reactions he should rigorously avoid the substance indicated and, if necessary, be desensitized. If he fails to react to any it might be worth trying tuberculin, if he reacts to Pirquet's test with old tuberculin. As a last resort I would suggest a complete change of environment, if possible. I assume, of course, that the nose has been thoroughly examined by a competent rhinologist.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

TREATMENT OF MAMMARY CARCINOMA BY RADIATION.

Correction.

SIR G. LENTHALL CHEATLE points out an important error in his article on this subject published in our issue of May 3rd. The sixth line of the second column of page 810 should read: "is 0.5 mm. of platinum"; not, as printed, "is 5 mm. of platinum."

TESTIMONIAL TO SIR RONALD ROSS.

We printed on February 22nd (p. 356) a list of those whose donations had been received during November, December, and January last in response to the appeal on behalf of the Ross Award Fund printed in the *British Medical Journal* of May 11th, 1929. Further contributions have been received during February, March, and April from the Penang Gazette Press, Ltd. (£654), the Railway Institute at Ebute Metta, and from Mrs. H. P. Benson, Lieut.-Colonel D. E. Crawford, W. C. Penny, T. M. Rayne, Lieut.-Colonel Temple, and F. R. Welch, amounting in all to £708 6s. 7d. The total sum subscribed, with interest, was £13,675 19s. 11d. on May 1st. Donations should be sent to Lloyds Bank, Ltd., 110, High Street, Putney, S.W.15.

CONFERENCE ON BIRTH CONTROL.

THE conference held on April 4th to discuss the giving of information on birth control by public health authorities passed the resolution submitted to it (*British Medical Journal*, April 19th, p. 755) in an amended form, which reads as follows: "That this conference calls upon the Minister of Health and public health authorities to recognize the desirability of making available medical information on methods of birth control to married people who need it."

IRRADIATED ERGOSTEROL.

DR. F. N. MOOS (Bombay), in the course of a letter on the above subject, writes: The more one reads of vitamin D the more one is convinced of the limited knowledge we still have of this "accessory food substance." It is premature, therefore, to employ a principle of doubtful utility to improve a standard natural product such as milk. If we are to accept Dr. Coward's statement that fresh milk contains hardly any vitamin D, then the logic of irradiating milk to concentrate the same active principle for use as an antirachitic measure in infants is unsound. Apart from these considerations, reports on the dangers of indiscriminate use of highly concentrated irradiated milk products cannot be overestimated. Idiosyncrasy undoubtedly plays an important part, and it is a well-known fact that a certain type of infant cannot tolerate cod-liver oil in any form. Especially during the summer months toxic and other symptoms of gastrointestinal derangement are known to follow a minimum quantity of a vitamin D product. Every mother in the tropics knows that dermatitis, eczema, and boils result from the use of cod-liver oil. Manufacturers should arrange for clean, fresh, and wholesome food products, in quality as near as possible to that of natural food. The addition of a therapeutic or prophylactic principle for special cases should be left in the hands of the medical attendant. To sell a concentrated prophylactic or therapeutic product for general use is against all principles of dietetics. Why has the vitamin D factor long been advocated alone as a prophylactic measure? The calcium-phosphorus ratio as a determining factor in rickets has been well recognized. If the public craze goes as far as calcium-phosphorus I dare say commercial houses will soon arrange to adjust the percentage of calcium and phosphorus to meet all requirements.

"HOW MAN IS MADE."

DR. W. H. DU PRÉ (Coleford) sends us the MS. of a little essay on physiology by a boy of 10, which he thinks may be worthy of a wider public. The author heads his paper, "How Man is Made," and illustrates it with three lively anatomical drawings, one of which we reproduce below at the appropriate place.

"A man contains two eyes a Mouth and two ears, if a Dockter to feel your pulce he would catch hold of your hand, if he wanted to tell your temperature he would put it in your mouth or under your arm. There is blood vessels all over your lungs and right at the back is the back bone, and there are bones right from your back bone to the front they are called Ribs. Some time your hart moves so it can move every where but other time it stays at the same place and goes up and down. A hart is like this:



In your hand you have paws to let the sweet out of your body, it is best then to have a bath, it is very bad for you if all your paws are filled up, you would mostly be dead after a bit."

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, and 53 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 50 and 51.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement column appears in the *Supplement* at page 219.