

Letters, Notes, and Answers

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Stethoscope for Deaf Doctor

Dr. F. R. W. K. ALLEN (Killiney) writes: I suggest that "Scot," whose query appears in the *Journal* of March 12th, should try the original type of de Lee's stethoscope. Solomon's modification, although more convenient in many ways, does not transmit sound so well.

Income Tax

Resident Hospital Director

"J. R." occupies rent free a house adjoining a hospital which is recognized as a charity for income tax purposes. Is he liable to pay tax on the annual value of the house he occupies?

** The matter arises on the statutory exemption of hospital premises, which extends to "the public buildings, offices, and premises so far as not occupied by any individual officer . . . whose total income amounts to £150 or more . . ." The position therefore seems to be that the hospital is not exempt from tax on the dwelling house attached to the hospital, and unless "J. R." has a right to let the house it would seem probable—the point is not beyond doubt—that it is the hospital authorities who are liable to pay the tax in question.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Achlorhydria

Correction

Professor HENRY MOORE (Dublin) writes: Through a mistake the galley proofs of my paper entitled "A clinical study of achlorhydria" were returned too late to have my corrections made in the text in your issue of February 27th last. In Table II, page 365, L should read Fe with reference to the treatment of Case 6, and there should be no L in the treatment column for Case 8.

Doctors and District Nurses

Dr. M. GRAHAM DRILL (Alloway, Ayr) writes: "Nest" (March 5th, p. 456), as a "whole-time medical officer of health," would seem to be curiously out of touch with the relative positions of (a) doctor, (b) district nurse, and (c) patient. A district nurse is neither an employee nor an assistant to the family doctor, but is perfectly independent of him so far as the engagement of her services is concerned. The onus of calling her in, as also the meeting of the expenses incurred thereby, rests with the patient, not with the doctor. When a doctor is asked to attend, and the nurse's services have not already been availed of, the calling of her in is done at the recommendation of, or at any rate with the acquiescence of, the doctor. The nurse then carries out the doctor's instructions in relation to the patient by whom she is summoned, but only (and this is

important) in so far as they conform with the local nursing association's rules. It by no means follows, however, that because a doctor advises the services of the district nurse that his recommendation is necessarily acceptable from the patient's point of view. One reason for not employing the nurse in cases where the value of her services would seem to be obvious is the patient's omission to become a "member" (annual subscriber) of the local association, and/or may even be found to be already in debt in respect of fees due to the association for previous nursing visits or confinements. A reason of this nature is rarely stated to the doctor, and, I should imagine, is most unlikely, such is human frailty, to be given to your correspondent's "health visitors on their normal rounds." True, the doctor, in cases where he knows his patients, may, and frequently does, as a matter of convenience, convey the message asking the nurse to attend; but on such occasions he is merely acting as the agent of the patient, and, if he is wise, will be careful to make this clear at the time.

Raw Milk and Dental Caries

Dr. R. J. HOOKER (Brighton) writes: I was interested to read in the *Journal* of January 30th the report of Mr. Sprawson's paper. My daughter, now aged 3½ years, has had about a pint of raw "certified" milk daily since she was 1½. It has always been difficult to persuade her to eat anything hard or fibrous, and so, to provide her with the necessary nourishment, she has had to have a diet which consisted chiefly of soft foods. She did not cut her first tooth until she was 11 months of age, and at 1½ years still had only her upper and lower incisors present. At present her teeth show no sign whatever of caries. Here is a case of a child who might have been expected to have caries on account of the nature of her diet, but who has no sign of it. The fact that she has had raw milk would seem to support Sprawson's deductions.

Vacancies and Courtesies

"M.B., B.S." writes: In every number of the *Journal* vacant resident appointments are advertised. In early February I answered one of these advertisements. May I quote the result? The applications had to be in by February 15th. From another candidate I learned that the "short list was out" on February 16th, and that on February 18th the appointment was made. And now, on March 5th, I get a reply to my application! In these days, when resident appointments to many candidates are an ill-afforded luxury, is it too much to expect the courtesy of an early refusal?

The Common Cold

Dr. W. M. JACKSON (Falmouth) writes: I have read with much interest the correspondence on the common cold. My own experience of the use of the following is that it is remarkably efficient in preventing the onset of a cold if taken at once or at the appearance of the very first suggestion of a cold. The mixture is: Ammon. carb. gr. v, pot. chlor. gr. v, vin. ipecac. m v, sp. chlorof. m x, sp. aeth. nit. m xx, aq. ad. 3 ss. This should be taken in about a wineglassful of water. It is much more effective if taken half to one hour before meals, and it may be repeated in two or three hours if any suggestion of a cold remains. It is better to take light meals during the time the medicine is being used. I have found this, for myself and family, almost uniformly successful, and, moreover, it is never necessary to take more than one or two doses. When the cold has once definitely set in, the mixture is apparently of no use.

"The Student in Irons"

"A LECTURER" writes: Examiners seem to be of two kinds: those who try to find out what a candidate knows, and those who do find out something he does not know—a much easier task. To the activities of the latter class are due the cramming of masses of isolated facts, even between papers and vivas. It is quite notorious that examinations in which the candidate has to run the gauntlet of half a dozen examiners are generally known as "tricky," and produce results which surprise even the examiners themselves, and sometimes astonish teachers. No wonder students in their last years become weary and apathetic, talk of "luck," trust to chance, and only read books written by examiners.

Vacancies

Notification of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 54, and 55 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 52 and 53.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 103.