

## Letters, Notes, and Answers

All communications in regard to editorial business should be addressed to The EDITOR, British Medical Journal, British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1.

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### QUERIES AND ANSWERS

#### Plantar Corns

"CLAVUS" (South Africa) writes: I would be grateful for advice in the treatment of plantar corns, and incidentally of interdigital epidermophyton infection (as I understand it to be). Presumably the latter has been with me without causing discomfort for ten or fifteen years; but during the past two and a half years I have had hard corns on the soles of my feet, which I have been assured are of similar origin. Almost eighteen months ago these were given one exposure of  $x$  rays in London, and I was assured they would disappear. If anything they are worse; and are certainly painful at times now. Recently I have tried repeated applications of phenol and even of nitric acid, without effect. Salicylic acid makes no impression at all. Carbon dioxide snow I have not tried, for I understand it necessitates some days in bed; and as even acids make car driving painful, I can quite believe it. I would like to know of a less drastic but effective measure for what is a surprisingly troublesome complaint.

#### Varicose Veins: Oedema after Treatment

Mr. A. DICKSON WRIGHT writes in reply to J. A. L. G.'s query (March 12th, p. 506) regarding the oedema which persists after the treatment of varicose veins by the injection method and after the application of elastoplast bandaging to ulcers: In the case of treatment by injections a residue of chemical inflammation is left in the legs, and the blockage of numerous veins necessitates some readjustment of the venous circulation before circulatory equilibrium is restored. The existence of ulceration points to long-standing stagnation, and the healing of the ulcer, brought about by expulsion of the oedema by elastoplast bandaging, is not the signal for the suspension of all form of support, because it takes some time for the leg to lose its firmly established oedematous habits. For the maintenance of this support I recommend the spiral elastic stocking made for me by Bourjeaud or Down Bros. It is of the utmost importance that these should be made to measurements carefully taken when the leg has been rendered *absolutely free* from oedema by firm strapping. The stockings should be worn until such time as the legs cease to swell, thus indicating that equilibrium between arterial and venous circulations has been regained. In certain cases of extensive deep thrombosis, when the venous return is very embarrassed, the lifelong use of efficient elastic stockings may be necessary to secure the patient's comfort and to keep him safe from "gravitational" complications.

#### Income Tax

##### Maid-servant: Professional Expense

"D. R." pays a maid-servant £1 per week, and is allowed to regard one-third of that expense as "professional" because of the amount of work done in connexion with the practice. What is the position with regard to the cost of her food?

\* \* We assume that one-third of the wages was allowed because she spends one-third of her time in connexion

with the professional side of the work, and not that one-third of £52 = £17 represents a fair inclusive amount for that work. If so, "D. R." can certainly claim to deduct also one-third of the cost of the maid's food. There is no standard rate of allowance—so much must depend on the actual facts—but no doubt a reasonably close estimate can be made.

### LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

#### Chloroform and the Edinburgh School

Dr. HARLEY WILLIAMS (Tavistock Square, W.C.1) writes: At an inquest at Stepney the other day, a member of the profession, answering a question from the coroner, "Is not the use of chloroform under a cloud?" is reported to have said, "Yes, unless one comes from Edinburgh." It is a common misapprehension that the Edinburgh school teaches the use of chloroform to the disfavour of other anaesthetics. No doubt the fact that this drug was introduced by Sir James Y. Simpson, and first used in Edinburgh in 1847, has given it a traditional association with the school. But the exclusive use of chloroform was not the teaching given in my student days, nor is, I think, at the present time. I was a member of the University professors' clinic of surgery during 1921 and 1922. There was in the operating theatre a conspicuous notice that no chloroform must be used save by special permission of the surgeon. We were accustomed to give ether, with some chloroform-ether mixture for induction, and I think this practice was general in the other surgical clinics.

#### Tour of German Mental Hospitals

Under the auspices of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association a study tour of German mental hospitals and clinics has been arranged to take place from April 25th to May 4th. The party will leave Liverpool Street Station on the Monday morning and travel by Flushing to Cleve, whence the journey will be continued by motor-coach to Bedburg-Hau, Gutersloh, Bielefeld, Giessen, Frankfurt, Wiesloh, Bruchsal, Karlsruhe, Illenau, and Renchen. The week-end will be spent at Baden-Baden, allowing an opportunity for a visit to the Black Forest, and the return journey will be made from Strasbourg by train. The hotel and travelling charges from London are RM. 445 (about £30 14s. at the present rate of exchange), payable by ordinary cheque about ten days before the commencement of the tour to the Reisebüro der Hamburg-Amerika Linie, Sofienstrasse 13 Am-Kurgarten, Baden-Baden. Members intending to make this tour are asked to notify, as early as possible, the honorary secretary, Dr. A. E. Evans, 11, Weymouth Avenue, Mill Hill, N.W.7, intimating also the names of relatives or friends by whom they may be accompanied.

#### Aircraft Wreckage: Air Ministry's Appeal

As medical men are often among the first to arrive on the scene of an aeroplane accident, we publish the following note received from the Air Ministry calling attention to the great difficulties sometimes caused by private persons thoughtlessly removing parts of damaged aircraft: "It is of the greatest importance that the causes of accidents to aircraft should be ascertained. Whenever a serious accident is reported the Air Ministry inspector of accidents proceeds with the least possible delay to the scene of the accident to examine the crashed machine, and it is essential for his purposes that the wreckage should not have been disturbed more than is necessary to set the occupants free and to prevent any immediate risk of damage to persons or property. During the interval, therefore, before the arrival of the inspector, members of the public are earnestly requested to abstain from any interference with a wrecked aircraft, except for these emergency purposes. The police already have instructions on the whole matter, and interference with wreckage is definitely prohibited by law. A further point of great importance is that broken pieces of the aircraft (for example, a part of a propeller) may be found some distance away. It will be of the utmost assistance if the finding of such pieces is immediately reported to the police or to the inspector of accidents."

#### Vacancies

Notifications of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 76, 77, 78, 79, 82, and 83 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 80 and 81.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 131.