

Myositis Ossificans Progressiva

"HELP" writes: A sturdy child of 7 years has developed myositis ossificans progressiva involving chiefly the flat muscles of the back, which are all becoming masses of bone. The axillary and neck muscles are also becoming affected so that movements of the head are impossible, and feeding can be achieved only with great difficulty. The disease is usually considered hopeless, and the sufferer is allowed slowly to become a solid mass of bone. Has anyone ever had any success with this disease? Or can anyone make any suggestions? Anything would be tried in a case which, untreated, holds such a hopeless prognosis.

Pruritus in Pregnancy

Mr. DONALD I. CURRIE, F.R.C.S. (Colwyn Bay), writes in reply to Dr. F. W. Lawson's query under this heading (June 3rd, p. 991): I suggest that he should treat the affected parts by exposure to ultra-violet light. Two or three exposures at three- or four-day intervals are usually all that is required, the patient being placed in the lithotomy position and the parts being well retracted. Cold bathing and an antiseptic dusting powder should be used between applications.

Income Tax*Board and Lodging of Son Acting as Assistant*

"R. S." has a son who acts as his locumtenent and assistant, and he claims to deduct as professional expenses "the fees of £7 7s. per week as locum and £2 2s. as assistant," also £2 2s. and £1 1s. per week as "maintenance" expenses. The assessor objects to the deduction of £1 1s. per week for maintenance as assistant, on the ground that he would have been staying at home in any case.

** The objection does not seem to be well founded. If the son does assist in the practice, and does, in fact, receive £2 2s. per week in cash and maintenance to the value of £1 1s. per week in respect of his services, it seems irrelevant to consider what would have been the position if he were not rendering those services. The relationship is also irrelevant unless the value of the emoluments claimed is clearly excessive on a *quantum meruit* basis. The amount of the allowances claimed seems reasonable, but, of course, a lot depends on the facts—that is, on the value and cost of the board and lodging provided.

Car Transactions

"MAGNETO'S" car transactions have been as follows:

October, 1921.	Bought car A for £487.
December, 1926.	Bought car B for £130.
February, 1930.	Sold car B for £15, and Bought car C for £165.
April, 1933.	Sold car A for £10, and Bought car D for £180.

** It would have paid "Magneto" better to have claimed the wear and tear allowance throughout, but as it is we advise him to claim the renewal allowance for 1931-2 on car B—that is, £130-£15=£115, invoking Section 24 of the Act of 1923 to justify the reopening of the assessment and the repayment of the appropriate amount to him. The renewal allowance for car A—that is, £180-£10=£170—will affect the profit for the year 1933 and therefore the income tax assessment for 1934-5. The wear and tear allowance should be claimed for 1935-6 and onwards.

Allowance for Use of Residence

"M.R.C.S." has not practised in recent years. She and her husband have now decided to take a house in a suburb. "M.R.C.S." will put up her plate and see whether she can acquire a practice. "The whole venture is rather in the nature of a speculation," and they are taking a larger house than they would otherwise require so as to be equipped with consulting room, etc. What expenses can be deducted?

** The expense of fitting up the consulting room is capital outlay and cannot be deducted, but a proportion of the general expenses can be treated as professional. It will be a little difficult to fix that proportion because presumably comparatively little use is likely to be made of the consulting room to begin with—we would suggest that one-quarter might be claimed.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.**Non-differentiation of Abdominal Musculature**

Dr. NORMAN FLOWER (surgeon to the Yeovil Hospital) writes: In view of the rare occurrence of this condition it has been suggested to me that some record should be made. The patient, a commercial traveller aged 68, was admitted to the Yeovil Hospital with acute appendicitis on January 2nd. At the operation a modification of Battle's incision was used, and the following abnormalities of the abdominal wall were revealed: There was no linea semilunaris. The rectus possessed no separate sheath. The rectus and internal oblique did not exist as separate entities. The lower quadrant of the abdominal wall was composed of a thick "plaque" of muscle, uniform in structure, and extending from the middle line to the anterior superior spine and Poupart's ligament, the direction of the fibres being vertical in the mid-line, and gradually diverging towards the outer side to make their attachment to Poupart's ligament. For the purpose of investigation the common aponeurosis was rapidly lifted in both directions to these limits. The patient made an uneventful recovery, so that no opportunity has been afforded for a more extensive and detailed examination.

Simultaneous Herpes Zoster and Varicella in the Same Individual

Dr. E. B. HOLLOWAY (Bettiah, Bihar, India) writes: A lady aged 67 developed a severe attack of herpes zoster of the superior ophthalmic division of the fifth nerve on March 1st, 1933. Seven days later she had a slight rise of temperature, followed twenty-four hours later by a typical varicella rash over trunk and limbs. She had never had chicken-pox. A garden coolie had had chicken-pox fourteen days before her attack of herpes zoster, and her own sister, aged 70, developed the disease ten days later.

Artificial Male Urethra

Mr. ALEX. E. ROCHE (London, W.1) writes: Last December, at the West London Hospital, I amputated a penis for urethral carcinoma extending from the external meatus to the scrotum, and implanted the urethral stump into the perineum just behind the scrotum. Subsequently the patient inquired if he could be fitted with an apparatus to enable him to pass water while standing instead of squatting. At my suggestion and request the Genito-Urinary Company made a tapering rubber cup, about 2 inches deep, whose lumen is continued into a rubber tube, the length and width of the latter being about 6 inches and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch respectively. The oval mouth of the cup measures about $2\frac{1}{2}$ by 2 inches, and has rounded lips for application to the perineum. This apparatus (price 10s. 6d.) enabled the patient, at his first attempt, on May 11th, 1933, to micturate accurately and cleanly while standing, into a conical specimen glass, without spilling a drop. Thus, by means of a simple rubber cup and tube, this patient is now able to avail himself of the social advantages gratuitously provided by the community, free from the expenses entailed by the squatting position.

Mirror-Writing

"SINISTRAL" writes: Like Dr. Richard Bell in his letter on page 947 of your issue of May 27th, I was surprised to learn it was not common knowledge that almost anyone with a few minutes' practice can produce mirror-writing with his left hand. The knowledge is useful, for it was a common "tip" in the last war to give to patients with a wound which prevented the use of the right hand. And it was uncommon to find one who could not, after a little practice, write to his friends, merely getting someone to add a note to hold the letter before the mirror.

Disclaimer

Dr. A. C. MAGIAN writes: With regard to the publication in the lay press of certain items highly eulogistic of the work of myself and a colleague in the matter of cancer research and a new line of treatment, I desire to state that they have appeared without my consent or approval: also that they contain many inaccuracies, and are completely misleading as far as my own portion of the work is concerned.

Vacancies

Notifications of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, and 47 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenancies at pages 46 and 47.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 259.