

## Letters, Notes, and Answers

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## QUERIES AND ANSWERS

### Gerard's "Herball"

Dr. W. DARLEY-HARTLEY (Rondebosch, Capetown) writes: I have in my possession a copy of Gerard's *Herball*, that great volume of Elizabethan *materia medica*, published in 1597 and printed by John Norton at London. I should be very grateful if any of your bibliophile readers could inform me what edition of Gerard this is, and whether copies are rare. If they could at the same time give me any particulars about the author himself I would be grateful. I have been asked to show the book at a historical exhibition arranged for the ensuing South African Medical Congress in September, and any information would be of value. It contains a dedication to Lord Burghley.

\*\* John Gerard was born in 1545 at Nantwich and died in 1612 in London. At the age of 17 he was apprenticed to Alexander Mason, a surgeon in large practice and twice Warden of the Barber-Surgeons' Company, of which Gerard was admitted a freeman in 1569 and a member of the Court of Assistants in 1595. Gerard was by then well known as a skilled herbalist; he was superintendent of Lord Burghley's gardens in the Strand and at Theobalds in Hertfordshire. In 1596 he published a list of the plants cultivated in his own garden in Holborn. In December, 1597, appeared the folio volume which has made his name a household word, his *Herball*. The original of this was the *Stirpium Historiae Pemptades* (1583) of Rembert Dodoens of Malines, with many of Gerard's own remarks inserted, such as localities for scarce plants in various parts of England, and allusions to persons and places. In 1633 Thomas Johnson prepared a new edition of the *Herball*, which was reprinted word for word three years later. The genus *Gerardia* was named by Linnaeus in memory of Gerard. In 1639 the Barber-Surgeons' Company, of which he was Master in 1608, paid 25s. 6d. for a copy of the *Herball* for its library. Further information will be found in the article on Gerard in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

### Vehicle Sickness

"YORKSHIRE" writes: A woman patient suffers from vomiting every time she rides in her husband's motor car. She states she has suffered, ever since she can remember, when riding in trains, buses, and trams. No treatment seems to benefit her. Can anyone having experience of similar cases suggest a remedy?

### Nocturnal Enuresis at Menopause

"O'OKIEP" (London, W.) asks for suggestions in the treatment of spasmodic nocturnal enuresis in a woman, aged 55. Menstruation has been absent for some months past, though it has recently been present—scanty and irregular in character. No other abnormalities, physical or psychical.

### Alopecia Areata

"A. A. H." writes: I have a patient with alopecia areata who has seen everybody in this part of the world and tried all the usual remedies—with no avail. The Wassermann reaction is negative. I should be grateful for suggestions as to any recent treatment.

## LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

### Tobias Venner and his "Via Recta"

A correspondent writes: Apropos of your amusing synopsis of some of Tobias Venner's views on tobacco, straw, tries and cream, etc. (June 17th, p. 1068), it may interest some of the profession to know that a copy of the 1638 edition of this very book is to be sold at Sotheby's, in Bond Street, on July 4th. The abbreviated title, as given in the catalogue, is *Via Recta ad vitam longam*. "Or, a plain Philosophical Demonstration . . . for the preservation of health . . . a Treatise of the Famous Baths of Bathe . . . as also an accurate Treatise concerning Tobacco. R. Bishop for H. Hood." There are a few other old medical books in the same sale: Vesalius, *Anatomy*, Amsterdam, 1617, with forty anatomical plates; Otto Tachenius, *Hippocrates Chymicus discovering the ancient foundation of the late Viperine Salt with his Clavis thereunto annexed translated by I. W.*, 1677; Hieronymus Von Braunschweig, *Das Buch zu istilieren*, 1532; Cogan, *The Haven of Health* . . . "Hereunto is added Preservation from the Pestilence, with a short Censure of the late Sicknes at Oxford," 1589; Luis Lobera de Avila, *Ein Nutzlich Regiment der Gesundheit*, with woodcuts of bloodletting, Augsburg, 1531; Marsilius Ficinus, *De Triplici vita libritres*, Bologna, 1501; and one or two others.

### Posture in Labour

Dr. CHARLES J. HILL AITKEN (Rotherham) writes: The late Dr. W. E. Fothergill, in his *Manual of Midwifery*, recommended that the legs be down when the head is still above the brim; that the legs be up when the head is in the pelvis; and that the legs be down again when the head is passing the perineum. This procedure will facilitate labour. These positions can be taken up by the patient lying on her left side and on her bed. The manual was published in the late 'nineties.

### Portable Lithotomy Support

Dr. SHEILA MACPHERSON asks us to state that the makers in London of the portable lithotomy support, described in the *Journal* of June 17th (p. 1058), are Messrs. Allnatt and Partners. The appliance is also to be obtained from Messrs. J. Gardner and Son, Forrest Road, Edinburgh.

### Inflammation after Use of Depilatories

Dr. L. H. FISHER (Brighton) writes: In your Letters, Notes, and Answers column of June 17th there is a reference to adenitis following the use of depilatories. Recently I had a similar case, and I have treated at least half a dozen cases in six or seven years. The condition, in my opinion, does not appear to be an adenitis. It resembles more a subcutaneous abscess, probably at the root of a sweat gland. In each case there has been two or more present—in one case eight small abscesses about the size of a hazel-nut. I consider depilatories to be definitely dangerous.

### The A.A. Irish Handbook

The Automobile Association (Fánum House, New Coventry Street, W.1) has now issued its *Irish Handbook* for 1933-4. Particulars are given of all Irish hotels and garages holding the full A.A. appointment, and a note is included of houses where hot and cold running water is provided in the bedrooms. Details are given concerning the services to which members are entitled from the A.A. road patrols and departments, and there is a map in atlas form (scale sixteen miles to the inch). Further information covers foreign tours, steamship rates for motor vehicles, times of lighting up for Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State, and formalities in connexion with crossing from the Free State to Northern Ireland and vice versa.

### Vacancies

Notifications of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50, and 51 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenancies at pages 48 and 49.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 296.