

## Letters, Notes, and Answers

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### QUERIES AND ANSWERS

#### England's Debt to Scotland

Dr. J. H. McCULLOCH (Colvend, Dalbeattie, Scotland) would be grateful for biographical or other information bearing upon contributions of Scotsmen, past and present, to medical science in England.

#### Treatment of Chronic Herpes

"VESICLE" (Norfolk) writes: I wonder if any readers could give me advice as to the treatment of a lady, aged 60, with chronic herpes frontalis. The original attack was five years ago. Since then the pain has been constant, with repeated outbreaks of spots on the head. Her life is made unbearable, and no treatment seems to be of any avail.

#### Threadworms and Printers' Devils

##### Corrigendum

A grotesque blunder was made last week in our printing office, for which apologies are due to readers in general and to Colonel W. P. Macarthur in particular. At page 224, in a footnote to one of the letters making suggestions for the treatment of threadworms, Colonel Macarthur was misquoted as recommending "the use of two grains of santonin and half an ounce of calomel by mouth." We feel sure that this will have been recognized by every reader as a misprint for half a grain.

#### Income Tax

##### Production of Bank Pass-book

"JUNIUS" has been asked by the inspector of taxes to produce his bank pass-book for scrutiny. Can this request be enforced?

\*\* The inspector has himself no statutory authority to require evidence in support of a taxpayer's return, but if the return is not accepted and an assessment in excess of the amount of the return is made, the taxpayer's only remedy is to appeal to the Commissioners, and that body has a very wide discretion as to what evidence it requires for the purpose of the appeal. It may be worth while pointing out that the pass-book forms part of the material which a professional accountant would commonly expect to be available to him when preparing accounts for a practice, so that its relevance on an income tax matter must, in general, be admitted.

##### Contribution to Superannuation Fund

"I. T. X." obtained relief from 1921 to 1928 on that portion of the premiums (in connexion with a university superannuation fund) which had been borne by her. Since 1928 she has borne, and has had allowed for income tax, the whole amount of the premiums. The authorities now say that those allowances were incorrect, and are seeking to adjust the allowances for the last five years.

\*\* There is no allowance for premiums paid in respect of deferred annuity policies parallel to that in respect of life

assurance. There is, however, a partial form of relief governed by Section 32 of the Finance Act of 1921, which provides for the allowance of payments made by employees to approved superannuation funds. "I. T. X." was evidently entitled to relief while an employee of the university concerned, but if she left that employment in 1928 her subsequent payments would not be allowable for income tax.

### LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

#### Prescription of Hypnotic Drugs

Dr. G. NESBITT-WOOD (Hastings) writes: I am afraid "Pharmacist's" suggestion (*Journal*, February 3rd, p. 224) for the limitation of hypnotic drugs of the barbitone group—namely, marking the prescription "Not to be repeated"—is of little use so long as a number of lesser chemists are prepared to sell them over the counter like so many sweets. A patient of mine during a long illness received sodium barbitone, and, unknown to me at the time, developed a perfect passion for the drug. One night I was called to find her in a coma, and the whole matter came out. Secreted round her room were eighty tablets of sodium barbitone, each of 5 grains, which she said she had bought from the same chemist in the space of three days. When I visited this man he blandly showed me his book recording the sale of twenty tablets only, and as it was his word against the patient's I could take the matter no further than request him not to serve her again. I was later informed that when she again tried to obtain supplies at his shop he suggested that she should change her doctor and so obtain official sanction for more. Since then I have had a two years' struggle with her, and she has never again divulged the name of the chemists from whom she gets her tablets, but I know that she visits Eastbourne, Brighton, Lewes, Rye, and other places, and gets supplies at all of them, and from time to time gets them in this town. She says some chemists have offered to send her all she needs by post. Her husband caught out one chemist in Brighton, who was as cool as you like over it. "If we refused you, our rivals would not," was the gist of his remarks. As this woman has made four attempts on her life with sodium barbitone (she is perfectly sane), it would appear that regulations such as those governing morphine might be advantageous. I must, of course, state that my patient admits that all the first-class pharmacies in this town have refused her point blank when she could not produce a proper prescription.

#### Disclaimer

Dr. W. H. D. CROOK (Wonford House, Exeter) writes: In a recent issue of a Sunday newspaper there is an article containing a statement about me which is not only completely inaccurate but physically impossible. At the end of the article is what appears to be an interview with me. This "interview" consisted of a telephone trunk call, in the course of which I particularly asked the newspaper concerned not to publish my name, and emphasized the fact that I wanted no publicity whatever. I had no idea that they intended to report any part of this conversation.

#### Solute for Foot Baths

"OTTUM" (Liverpool) writes: Frequently one orders a foot-bath containing sodium carbonate for tired and swollen feet, and for arthritis of the tarsus or ankle. For some time I have used, instead of the carbonate, the well-known soap powder "persil," one tablespoonful to the gallon, and have found it to be more efficacious than the former, and much less severe on delicate skins. In like proportion a full bath can be taken in cases of lumbago, sciatica, and various suitable arthritic conditions, with most beneficial results.

#### Raised Intraocular Tension

##### Corrigendum

The second sentence of Dr. Victor Purvis's letter under this heading (February 3rd, p. 215) contained a superfluous word which changed his meaning. The phrase should read: "but, from an ophthalmological point of view."

#### 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, 46, 47, and 48 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 44 and 45.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 64.