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Letters, Notes, and Answers.

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

HYDROA.

"W. L." asks for advice in the treatment of a boy, aged 3½ years, who suffers from hydroa. The condition is of six weeks' duration, and recurring on the back, legs, and about the elbows. Arsenic, bismuth carbonate, calcium lactate, magnesia, have been tried internally without success, and an egg-free diet has had no effect.

PRURITUS.

DR. T. C. HUNTER (Newcastle-on-Tyne) writes in reply to "W. A." (September 25th, p. 532), who asked for suggestions in the treatment of pruritus, with thickening of the skin of the palms of the hands: I found an eruption of this character, which was probably psoriasis, disappear like magic by rubbing in equal parts of ung. picis, ung. hydrarg. ammon. chlor., ung. salicylic. This treatment was suggested by Dr. Wells Patterson. The eruption, which was extensive and on the instep of the foot, did not recur.

NERVOUS VOMITING.

"H. W. B." asks for suggestions for the treatment of a young woman, aged 23, of good physique and with no apparent disease of the alimentary tract, who suffers from vomiting after excitement. After an evening dance or an important golf match she sleeps soundly as usual, but awakes about 5 a.m. with a violent attack of vomiting and sickness, which continues for five or six hours, unaccompanied by pain or headache, and ending spontaneously, with no after-effects. The vomit is watery, and the attacks occur irrespective of whether she has had supper or not. The condition has lasted for about two years, in spite of various forms of treatment, including sodium bromide at bedtime.

X-RAY TREATMENT OF RINGWORM.

DR. CHRIS. J. MCSWEENEY (Cardiff) writes in reply to "T. E. R." (September 11th, p. 511): The use of aluminium filters is theoretically an advantage in eliminating the dangerous soft rays and so minimizing the risks of resultant radio-dermatitis. If the Sabouraud pastille is at half skin distance it will probably be between the filter and the tube, and so will receive unfiltered rays. Its colour will therefore be no guide as to the quantity of rays which has reached the scalp. If the pastille is on the skin—the method originally employed by Hampson in 1911—it of course receives filtered rays, and its colour can be matched as usual with the Lovibond tintometer, against fractions of Teinte 8. Kienböck's strips, which are laid on the scalp, furnish probably the simplest method of calculating the dose of filtered rays. Whatever method is employed the time of exposure will be increased—even by 30 to 50 per cent., according to the thickness of aluminium used. As to whether filtered rays give more uniform epilation, I do not think this has ever been claimed for them. My own experience is that unfiltered rays, proceeding from a hard tube, and working with standard conditions of time, distance, voltage, and milliamperage, are more reliable.

WATERY EYES.

DR. L. J. GREEN (South Tottenham) writes: With reference to "A. G. F.'s" inquiry (October 2nd, p. 619) as to the origin of his watery eyes, the condition may be due to (1) a drainage fault in the lacrimal passages, perhaps associated with the presence of a mucocele of the lacrimal sac, or (2) a spasmodic hypersecretion through abnormal stimulation via the branch of the fifth nerve which supplies the lacrimal gland. Of these, the

first seems the more likely. The most common sites of obstruction to the flow of tears are at the lacrimal puncta, and in the course of the lacrimal duct—for example, in cases of intranasal disease. The condition could be brought about by repeated "colds." It can soon be determined whether the puncta are too small, and obstruction in the lacrimal duct is demonstrated by carefully passing a lacrimal probe. If a mucocele of the lacrimal sac is present the conjunctiva will be flooded with fluid every time the sac is pressed upon and thereby emptied. "A. G. F." should have the above points investigated.

INCOME TAX.

Sale of Investment.

"R. L. T." has been requested to state the date on which he sold a holding in War Loan, and how the money has been invested. Are these requests justified?

* * It has to be remembered that the inspector of taxes has very little legal ground for making inquiries direct of taxpayers. He is entitled to examine the returns, however, and the making of relevant inquiries enables him to agree with the assessments before they are formally authorized by the Commissioners, and thereby to avoid trouble at a later stage to all concerned. The first inquiry is evidently directed to ensuring that the assessment is technically correct and that any appropriate adjustment is made in the previous year's assessment; "R. L. T." may be entitled to some relief if he sold the War Loan in that year. The second inquiry rests on less obvious grounds. Presumably the inspector desires to ensure that no new income has been overlooked. Doubtless a general reply on that point will serve—for example, that it has been reinvested in such a way as to produce income taxed at its source.

Notifications to Panel Patients.

"J. R." explains that his Panel Committee deducted £2 14s. from his first cheque to cover the cost of the postage of notices sent to patients on his predecessor's panel intimating that he had taken over the practice. Can he deduct that amount from the full fees for income tax purposes?

* * No. The expense was incurred in the taking over of the practice—that is, it related, not to the working of it, but to the change in proprietorship, and as such is not allowable for income tax.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

HOUSE OF REST, MENTONE.

DR. D. W. SAMWAYS (Topsham, Devon) writes to call attention to the fact that invalid professional men requiring a change, and whose means are limited, are received into the House of Rest at Mentone, Riviera, at a charge of 30s. a week, all found, on application to the matron, Miss Goldie, or to Dr. Stanley Rendall, or to Dr. Samways, Mentone, during the winter season.

The home, we believe, is a philanthropic undertaking (apart from the charge of 30s. weekly), and is meant to help professional men who break down temporarily. It is hence useful to medical men of small means or their professional patients in like case.

A DANGEROUS DRUGS REGISTER.

UNDER the Dangerous Drugs Regulations, 1926, non-dispensing doctors, who have hitherto been exempt from such a requirement, must now keep a record of all "dangerous drugs" purchased or otherwise obtained. The *Register of Dangerous Drugs*, just published by Messrs. Woodrow and Co. (3, Cook Street, Liverpool), admirably serves this purpose in the simplest form consistent with the Regulations. Separate pages, provided with a thumb index, are set apart for the four groups of drugs and their preparations which must be registered—namely, morphine, cocaine, heroin, medicinal opium. In addition there is an excellent summary of the various regulations, 1921 to 1926, so far as they relate to duly qualified medical practitioners. The size of the *Register* is 10 in. by 6 in. The prices are: Bound, 6s.; post free, 6s. 6d.; or in strong Manila boards, 4s.; post free, 4s. 3d.

TREATMENT OF PRURITUS ANI.

DR. ERNEST WARD (Paignton) writes: Two medical men who believe themselves to have been immediately and permanently cured by a simple line of treatment have asked me to make known the method I have long used to treat this troublesome affliction. Anal pruritus arises in the great majority of cases from a *perianal dermatitis*, due to repeated infection during the cleansing after defaecation. To cure the dermatitis it is only necessary to avoid soiling the parts concerned. If paper is used each piece should be passed in one sweep from behind forwards, then rejected. Wool or a sponge used similarly may prove more efficient among the many sufferers from haemorrhoids, but paper will serve equally well in most patients and is vastly more convenient.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 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 162.