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What anæsthetic do you use, Doctor?

D. & C. Sutures...

—they are always dependable.

An extension of the Louth and District Hospital was opened by Princess Helena Victoria on June 14th. It provides a maternity ward with eight beds and accompanying cots, two private maternity wards, a lying-in room, ward kitchen, baby room, and offices. It also contains a children's ward, to be known as Princess Helena Victoria ward, with eight cots, together with a verandah and kitchen, and an x-ray department. The total cost of the extension and its equipment will be about £9,000.

THE centenary of the death of Alessandro Volta, the inventor of the voltaic pile, will be celebrated on September 8th at his birthplace, Como, during the meeting there of the International Congress of Physicists.

FOR those who find it necessary to refer to Government statistics the *Guide to Current Official Statistics of the United Kingdom* is a most useful volume. The fifth of these publications, covering the year 1926 and some of the early part of 1927, has just been issued by the Permanent Consultative Committee on Official Statistics. After an explanatory introduction, showing the object and the method of using the guide, there is a subject index. This is extraordinarily full, so that the student of beer, cider, divorce, hotels, inebriety, or the prerogative of mercy, can turn up his subject and find under it a reference, on any statistical point, to a later part of the volume, which gives a list of publications. Here he will find the name of the particular document in which the statistics occur, with the date and frequency of its publication, and its price. Between the subject index and the list of publications there is sandwiched a key which enables the inquirer to refer back to the subject index if he wishes to know the statistical contents of any of the publications in the list. For those interested in medical, social, and economic problems, or engaged in commercial or industrial enterprises the guide is invaluable. It is published by H.M. Stationery Office, price 1s., and can be obtained through any bookseller.

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.**

ORIGINAL ARTICLES and LETTERS forwarded for publication are understood to be offered to the *British Medical Journal* alone unless the contrary be stated. Correspondents who wish notice to be taken of their communications should authenticate them with their names, not necessarily for publication.

Authors desiring REPRINTS of their articles published in the *British Medical Journal* must communicate with the Financial Secretary and Business Manager, British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1, on receipt of proofs.

All communications with reference to ADVERTISEMENTS, as well as orders for copies of the *JOURNAL*, should be addressed to the Financial Secretary and Business Manager.

THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS of the British Medical Association and the *British Medical Journal* are *MUSEUM 9861, 9862, 9863, and 9864* (internal exchange, four lines).

THE TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESSES are:
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The address of the Irish Office of the British Medical Association is 16, South Frederick Street, Dublin (telegrams: *Bacillus, Dublin*); telephone: 4737 Dublin; and of the Scottish Office, 6, Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh (telegrams: *Associate, Edinburgh*; telephone: 4361 Central).

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

IMPERMEABLE FLOORS FOR HOSPITAL WARDS.

DR. FREDERICK WALKER (Holbeach, Lincolnshire) asks for information with regard to impermeable floors for hospital wards:

Our correspondent probably has in mind a rubber floor. Among hospitals whose wards, or portions of them, have recently been rubber-floored are St. Bartholomew's, London; the East Sussex Hospital, Hastings; the Royal National Sanatorium, Bournemouth; and the Victoria Hospital, Barnet. The firm which has done the work in all these and many other institutions is the North British Rubber Company, 204, Tottenham Court Road, W., which allows trade terms to hospitals, though not to private individuals. If a concrete floor is in view, a flooring known as "steel-crete," the proprietors of which are Messrs. Jones and Co., Avenue Chambers, Southampton Row, and which is claimed to be wearproof, dustproof, waterproof, and fireproof, seems to be widely used in various places—factories, dairies, and so forth—but we are not aware that it has been used for hospital wards.

INORGANIC SULPHATES IN HUMAN BLOOD.

DR. R. LINDSAY MACKAY (Wolverhampton) is seeking references to a reliable method for estimating the inorganic sulphates in human blood. One reference he has found is to an article by W. Denis in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, 1921, vol. xlix, p. 311. This method is not, Dr. Mackay states, very attractive.

The only method yet described with any authority for the determination of inorganic sulphates in human blood is that of Denis, referred to by our correspondent. It is certainly unattractive, since it suffers from the empiricism of all nephelometric methods. Should our correspondent desire to detect only gross changes in inorganic sulphates, such as are said to occur when there is extreme nitrogen retention (Denis and Hobson, *Journ. Biol. Chem.*, 1923, lv, 183), he might find that determinations of total sulphates gave a general indication of inorganic sulphate changes. The method for estimating total SO_4 (Denis and Leche, *Journ. Biol. Chem.*, 1925, lxxv, 561 and 565) is a relatively straightforward chemical manipulation.

TRAUMA AS A CAUSE OF AURICULAR FIBRILLATION.

DR. I. HARRIS (Liverpool) has sent another note in reply to Professor Hay's letter of June 25th (p. 1162). Dr. Harris thinks it obvious from the context of his first letter that the statement, "There has not been a shred of dependable evidence produced," referred to the clinical evidence, and this is the point to which he attaches importance.

We cannot continue this correspondence.

INCOME TAX.

Deduction for Superannuation.

"M. S." holds a public appointment and has to suffer a 5 per cent. charge in respect of superannuation, which extends not only to the emoluments which are assessable to income tax, but also to those which, being received in kind—that is, house and fuel—are not so assessable. Can he deduct the whole amount for the purpose of the assessment?

The assessment, being under Schedule E, "M. S." can deduct expenses incurred wholly, necessarily, and exclusively in the performance of the duties of his office. We understand that compulsory superannuation deductions are regarded as coming within this rule. It is not open to "M. S." to pay a part only of the total superannuation; it is a condition of his appointment, and, therefore, of his receiving the assessable emoluments that he should pay the whole. Consequently, on technical rather than on equitable grounds, we consider he can deduct the whole in the assessment of the liable portion of the emoluments.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

LOUD MOTOR HORNS.

THE Secretary of the Automobile Association has issued a circular letter stating that he has received a number of complaints about the excessive use of loud motor horns, especially at night-time. He points out that while the motorist is required by law to give audible warning of his approach, it is quite unnecessary to use a loud horn when a less powerful one would be sufficient. He submits that it would be more than a courtesy—presumably he means a loving kindness—if motorists would make a practice of fitting two horns to their cars, and using only the less strident in residential areas. We sympathize fully with the complainants, and with Mr. Stenson Cooke's concern not only for patients in hospitals and nursing homes, but also for the healthy citizen who is seeking rest for his limbs and brain; but as long as the law and a nervous public urge the motorist to make his presence known by noise, and as long as buttons are provided in a convenient spot on the car for making a noise, we fear that anxious and thoughtless drivers will continue to avail themselves of the opportunity. The British public might, at least, be thankful that the motorist in this country does not, like his brother abroad, keep his finger glued to the button.

"ANTISEPTIC."

DR. H. BROOM (Glengarnock) has found the word "antiseptic" in *Travels in England and Scotland*, translated from the French by Faujas Saint-Fond; printed in 1799 (vol. i, p. 113, line 14). He had previously supposed it to be a modern term. The word, however, is earlier than the date given; the first reference in the *New English Dictionary* is to the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1751; the second to Priestley's *Observations on Different Kinds of Air* (1774); he speaks of the "remarkable antiseptic power of nitrous air." Both writers used it in the sense of "counteracting putrefaction." St. Fond, speaking of the smoke of London, says that "the products of combustion are acid and consequently antiseptic," so that probably he was following Priestley.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 38, 39, 40, 41, 44 and 45 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locum tenencies at pages 42 and 43.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 19.