

the nervous system, and on the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system, together with clinical demonstrations on methods of examination. Any part of the course may be taken separately. The fee for the course, including pathology demonstrations, is £5 5s.; for those holding perpetual tickets £3 3s., and clinical clerks £4 4s.

THE Central Midwives Board for England and Wales, at a meeting on October 4th, had under consideration a communication from the Association of Municipal Corporations enclosing a letter to the Ministry of Health in regard to the conduct of cases before the Board. In this letter the Association urged the Ministry to give effect to a resolution adopted by the City Council of Canterbury expressing the opinion that the conduct of cases before the Central Midwives Board should be left in the hands of local authorities, that the attendance of witnesses should be made compulsory, and that all evidence in such cases should be given on oath. The Board approved Nether Edge Hospital, Sheffield, as a training school, subject to certain conditions, and also granted approval, *pro tem.*, as a lecturer, to Dr. W. B. Wishart.

THE fifth international congress for the treatment of industrial accidents and industrial hygiene, which was held at Budapest during the first week in September, was opened by Professor Kaufmann of Zürich, who delivered a lecture on the differentiation of trauma and disease. Sir Thomas Oliver read a paper on the influence of industrial poisons on the different organs, with special reference to lead, arsenic, and mercury. Among the other subjects considered were: the physiological response to the vapours of methyl and ethyl salts, the nervous sequels of accidents, pulmonary asbestosis, and the medico-legal aspects of occupational disease. The congress was visited by a large number of delegates from many countries.

As on several previous occasions the Société Médical du Littoral Méditerranéen has arranged an international medical tour of the Côte d'Azur to take place just after Christmas. Assembling at Marseilles on the evening of December 26th, the party will spend two days in visiting that neighbourhood and Toulon, proceeding afterwards to Hyères, Cannes, Juan-les-Pins, Antibes, Nice, Mentone, Monaco, and other places, where scientific demonstrations, therapeutic discussions, etc., will be arranged. Visits will be made to various centres of interest, including Dr. Voronoff's laboratory and the oceanographic museum at Monaco. At the conclusion of the tour, on January 5th, members of the party may proceed on an excursion to the Alps or on an excursion to Corsica, or may spend some days at Nice. Particulars may be obtained from Dr. M. Faure, 24 rue Verdi, Nice.

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.**

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

TREATMENT OF POST-NASAL CATARRH.

"A. X." asks for advice with regard to the treatment of an otherwise healthy man, aged about 60, who has suffered from post-nasal catarrh for two years. No benefit has resulted from a course of antiscalar vaccines or the use of an atomizer. There is a copious, viscid, and sometimes purulent secretion from the pharynx and back of the nose, with occasional dribbling from the nostrils.

INCOME TAX.

Fees Paid by Practitioners.

"W. J. M." has been requested by the income tax authorities to supply the names and addresses of medical men to whom he has paid fees of £10 and upwards during 1927-28 for assistance at surgical operations.

The relative statutory provision is Section 105 of the Income Tax Act, 1913, under which an "employer" can be called upon to give such particulars in respect of persons "employed" by him. The objection which, as it seems to us, our correspondent may very well be entitled to make is that the medical men in question are not in his employment, but both are in the position of jointly earning fees for work done for a patient. The question raises a somewhat difficult point of general law, but the normal case would, we think, fall outside the statutory rule.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

MR. FRANK ROMER (London, W.) asks our help in regaining touch with the secretary of a medical society with whom he has been in correspondence about the reading of a paper. His dilemma arises from the accidental destruction of letters and memoranda during a holiday.

MALIGNANCY AND THE ENZYME.

DR. W. C. MINCHIN (Sheerness-on-Sea), in reply to Lieut.-Colonel V. N. Whitmore's inquiry (September 15th, p. 514), writes to suggest a simple explanation. While Murphy and his fellow workers are satisfied that cancer is due to a ferment, Gye has shown by filtering cancerous material that neither the filtrate nor the material left on the filter was active, though, when they were again mixed, activity was restored. Dr. Minchin suggests that these results are more similar than might appear at first sight, and he quotes Chaston Chapman's book on brewing, in which, after a review of some of Pasteur's work upon yeasts, reference is made to Buchner's discovery in 1897 that the liquid contents of the yeast cell, when added to a fermentable liquid, could excite fermentation in the absence of any cells. Buchner concluded that fermentation resulted from the activity of an enzyme secreted by the yeast cell, to which he gave the name "zymase." Harden found by passing yeast juice through a Chamberland filter impregnated with gelatin that neither the filtrate nor the residue could bring about fermentation separately, though by mixing the two portions activity was restored. Harden recognized, thus, that the enzyme which remained on the filter required contact with the filtrate, the active constituent of which he designated the co-enzyme; the true chemical nature of this is still undetermined. Dr. Minchin adds: I have shown in my book on the tubercle virus, published by Messrs. Baillière, Tindall and Cox, that yeasts are always to be found in cancerous and tuberculous material, even in the filtrates and diseased tissues. A direct photomicrograph in my possession of a section of a cancer growth of the tongue plainly shows budding yeasts when stained by the Ziehl method.

EXAMINATION OF THE FAECES FOR TUBERCLE BACILLI.

DR. C. E. GALLAGHER (assistant medical officer, Leavesden Mental Hospital) has contributed to the annual report of the Metropolitan Asylums Board for 1927-28 an account of an investigation into the examination of the faeces for tubercle bacilli in the case of mental patients. He concludes that the direct smear examination of faeces is worthy of employment in all cases; in the event of a negative result being obtained the concentration method with ligroin may be tried. In some cases of febrile symptoms occurring in low-grade imbeciles such investigation of the faeces has been found to be helpful in clearing up the diagnosis, since these patients cannot, as a rule, be taught to expectorate their sputum, which they swallow.

FALLING BIRTH RATE AND CRUMBLING EMPIRES.

DR. GEORGE JONES (Downe, Kent) writes: Dr. Stephenson, (October 6th, p. 634) refers to the fall of the West Roman Empire under Honorius in 410. He thinks it was due to the increase of the parasite class which demanded *panem et circenses*, both free and at the expense of the provincials. Now the East Roman Empire survived for another thousand years. Constantinople was no better than Rome. What does seem to have been the immediate cause of the fall of Rome was the murder of Stilicho at the instigation of the cowardly Emperor Honorius, who skulked in the marshes at Ravenna while the barbarians entered Rome. We ought to remember that under Justinian Africa and Italy were largely freed from barbarians, but the civilization of the West Empire was never recovered. There must have been other causes in operation; what they were Gibbon has hinted only too clearly to those who read between his sonorous lines. The utter misery of the West under the barbarians may be gathered from Salvian's *De Gubernatione Dei* or from Cardinal Newman's University Studies. Not even Russia has gone through worse experiences.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 48, 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 163.