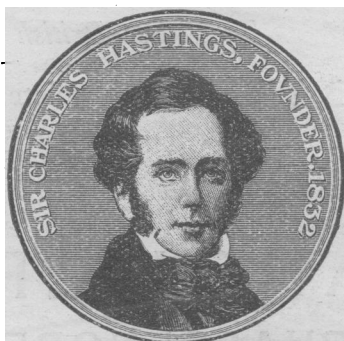


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EXCERPT FROM WRITINGS OF THE BYZANTINE GREEK PHYSICIAN, ALEXANDER OF TRALLES.—Alexander's work influenced the development of medicine and bears evidence of a truly pioneer spirit in an age of mental stagnation and slavish acceptance of authority. His medical writings are based upon Galen, whom he always calls "most divine." Nevertheless, he supplements and even criticises the treatment prescribed by this high authority when his own wide practical experience forces him to differ. In the extract here reproduced he differs from Galen, who in certain cases prescribed "drying" and "heating" medicines, such as mithridate, theriaca, etc., even while he admitted that all the patients thus treated had died. Remaining adamant in his opinion, Alexander thus apologises for contradicting his master: "Herein is illustrated the truth of the word once spoken by Galen himself of Archigenes; 'He was a man and it is therefore difficult to assume that he never erred.'"

μένονται δὲ καὶ ὁ θεότατος Γαλιένος οὐ λίθον ἀναπτύσαντός τινος, ἀλλὰ χαλαρίσας παραπλήσια καὶ ἄλλων τινῶν ἀναπτύσαντων δοκίμαζον τὴν χρυσάν. καὶ θαυμάζω, πῶς αὐτὸς οὐδενὶ τῶν ἐμψυχόντων ἡδυνήθη χρῆσασθαι, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἔφυγεν. ἐχρήσατο δὲ μᾶλλον τῇ θερμαινούσῃ ἰατρῇ — 'τὴν τε γὰρ) Μιθριδάτειον αὐτοῖς παρεῖχον', ὡς αὐτὸς) φησι, 'καὶ τὴν ἀθανασίαν καὶ τὴν ἐτι μᾶλλον ζητεῖν) δυναμένην θυμακὴν' — καὶ πάσαις ταῖς ἄλλαις ἀντιδότοις ταῖς πρὸς τοὺς ἀσθματικούς ἀναγεγραμμέναις διὰ θριμνίων τινῶν καὶ λεπτοπρότων συσκευασμέναις φαρμάκων. οὐ μόνον ἐπ' ἐνὸς ἀνδρός, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ πλείωνων ἐωρακέναι αὐτὰ φησιν. οὐδένα δὲ θνητὸν) τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα παθόντων,) ἐκφυγεῖν τὸν θάνατον, ἀλλὰ πάντας ἀπολέσθαι ὀλίγῳ πλείονα χρόνον ἢ ἐλάττωνα διαρκέσαι θνηθέντας. ἀλλ' ὅπως ἀληθὲς ἐστὶν ἐκείνο τὸ λεχθὲν ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ περὶ Ἀρχιγένους: 'χαλεπὸν γὰρ ἀνθρώπων ὄντα μὴ καὶ διαμαρτάνειν ἐν πολλοῖς, τὰ μὲν ἔλαττω ἀγνοήσαντα, τὰ δὲ κακίως κρίναντα

DATE: A.D. 525-605 (Modern Text)

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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.

DIET IN RHEUMATISM.

DR. GRAHAM GRANT (Gray's Inn, W.C.) writes: We are constantly being asked by elderly patients suffering from recurring attacks of subacute rheumatism what to eat, drink, and avoid, and we are charged with giving conflicting opinions when so consulted. Some medical men advise lemons, others disapprove; some permit beer as a beverage, others hold up their hands in horror (although brewers' labourers do not seem to have rheumatic ailments more than other classes of the community), and endless other instances of divergence can be mentioned, which leave the unfortunate patient with the fear that everything he is eating or drinking may make him worse. Can any of your readers supply me with a dietary which is a safe one without being too ascetic?

CLOTHES MOTHS.

DR. R. E. DRAKE BROCKMAN writes in reply to "H. G.," whose inquiry was printed last week:—An infallible method, which I devised after much loss from the depredations of clothes moths, is as follows: If the clothes are stored in drawers or boxes, get some cheap thin white cloth or linen and have it made into bags, which should be just larger than the drawer or box. Divide the bag into numerous divisions 4 in. wide by sewing across it. Into each of the divisions put a reasonable amount of crude naphthalene and close the ends of the partitions. When complete it looks something like a cork mattress, but, of course, only a small quantity of naphthalene is put in each partition. This mattress of naphthalene should be laid on top of the clothes next to the lid of the box, and will be found a certain protection against moths. I have thus kept my clothes moth-free for over twenty years. Of course, the clothes should be taken out a few days before use and thoroughly aired, if possible in the sun, to rid them of the smell of naphthalene.

CLEANSING OF THE CHALICE.

"MEDICUS" asks if there is any evidence that neglect to wipe the chalice between each participant during the Communion Service may give rise to the transmission of such an infection as pyorrhoecia. His own view at present is that, although it would seem cleanly to use a purificator, yet even this is hardly efficient as a means of eliminating risk of infection.

BROMIDROSIS.

"A. A." writes: I should advise "R. B. C." (July 12th, p. 86) to try a thorough and prolonged soaping every night with hot water and biniodide soap (Purke Davis's noko), and then rub liq. formaldehyde sap. (diluted, if necessary, to half or one-third strength) into the wet skin of the soles and between the toes. Suitable diet and a belladonna mixture would discourage sweating. Light socks should be worn, and it is beneficial to go barefoot whenever possible.

INCOME TAX.

Return to United Kingdom.

"G. H. A.," who is at present residing and working outside the United Kingdom, inquires on what basis his earnings would be assessed in this country if he came to reside and work here.

* * The amount of the liability would not be affected by his present earnings abroad; on coming to this country a new basis would be adopted. That basis would be: period to April 5th of the first year, the amount of that year's earnings; second year, the amount of the earnings of the first twelve months' in

the United Kingdom; third year, the amount of the earnings of the second year, or of the third year if less; after that, the previous year throughout. This, of course, assumes that "G. H. A." does not buy a share in a practice; in that case the previous profits of that practice would normally determine his liability, but in neither case would his present earnings enter into the calculation.

Succession to Practice; Cash Basis.

"ELM" was assistant to his father in a general practice from December, 1924, to April, 1928, when he took over the practice, for which he is now paying. He is informed that the authorities require the returns to be made on the basis of the bookings of the practice, which would involve heavy labour in preparing the statements and estimating the amount of bad debts.

* * We assume that "Elm" has not included in the cash receipts for the purpose of the income tax statements the cash received for work done prior to April, 1928. In that case the returns have undoubtedly not reflected the full earnings of the practice, but only that portion which has been received as cash. The attitude of the revenue authorities is correct, but perhaps a compromise could be arranged on the basis of revising the calculations to include all cash receipts, whether belonging to "Elm" or his father.

Car Allowance.

"V. F. F." was in partnership until September 30th, 1929, was unemployed to January 1st, 1930, and was then an assistant until April 1st, 1930, in a practice in which he acquired a partnership as from that date. What depreciation allowance can he claim in respect of the income earned in these periods?

* * Nothing can now be done as regards the income tax payable in respect of the share in the old practice; depreciation allowance should have been claimed at the time. (2) Strictly the same applies to the three months' employment earnings, though if that liability has not been settled yet, the inspector of taxes will perhaps admit a claim now to wear and tear allowance for the last quarter of the year 1929-30—that is, one-fourth of 20 per cent. of £200=£10. (3) For the year 1930-31 the new partnership's wear and tear claim is increased by the addition of "V. F. F.'s" car to those in partnership use, and the increase will be the amount of the 1930-31 claim on his car—that is, 20 per cent. of £160=£32.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

OSTEITIS FIBROSA.

WITH reference to the case of osteitis fibrosa, with initial symptoms resembling rheumatic infection, described by Drs. J. Salisbury Craig and James H. Shearer in the *Journal* of July 5th (p. 9), Dr. J. Tertius Clarke has asked the authors to explain why it was considered that the initial symptoms resembled rheumatic infection.

DR. SALISBURY CRAIG replies: The complaint of pain over the posterior aspect of the neck, the left deltoid region, and the left upper arm, together with the tenderness over those regions, were the initial features of the case which led the authors to suspect fibrositis. The subsequent development of mild pyrexia and pain in the left infra-axillary region, associated with the mitral stenosis, were regarded as further points in favour of a rheumatic infection.

PRURITUS ANI.

"CERONS" wishes to thank readers who have replied to his query about pruritus ani. So many (he says) have written to me about this distressing complaint that I find it difficult to reply to each one individually, and I hope that they will accept this formality instead.

A ROAD ACCIDENT.

MR. ARTHUR S. NICOLL (25, Ringstead Road, Catford, S.E.6) writes: May I endeavour through your columns to get in touch with the medical man who witnessed the accident to a motor cyclist and pillion rider, who were run down by a car, on the way to Hastings, on Sunday, June 22nd, about 12.30 p.m.? The doctor gave me his card at the time, but this has unfortunately been lost.

MEDICAL GOLF.

A British Medical Association Golfing Society for Sussex has been started, and the first meeting will be held on the links of the Brighton and Hove Golf Club on Sunday, September 23rd. A competition of 18 holes under handicap against bogey will take place. The captain, Colonel Dee, is offering a prize for this. The honorary secretaries of the society are Dr. J. H. Twiston Davies and Mr. Harold Downer. All communications should be addressed to 40, Wilbury Road, Hove.

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, 48, 49, 52, and 53 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 50 and 51.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 27.

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