

## Letters, Notes, and Answers

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## QUERIES AND ANSWERS

### Alopecia Areata

"B. B. L." (Aberdeen), replying to "A. A. H.'s" query (*Journal*, June 24th, p. 1138) asks: Does "all the usual remedies" include pituitary injections? She adds: There is an article by Bengtson in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (1931, xcvi, 1355), which suggests a new and promising line of treatment, the condition being regarded as a result of pituitary dysfunction.

### Phlebitis Migrans

"BIRKENHEAD" would welcome suggestions for radical treatment in the following case: A man, aged 58; history: enteric fever in 1899, operation for appendicitis 1916, phlebitis three weeks later in both thighs—duration two months. Subsequent attacks occurred in the right leg in 1921, '24, '26, '28. Since 1930 there have been almost continuous attacks in the same leg of about three weeks' duration. Previous treatment included stock and autogenous vaccines, iodides, mercury, citrates, etc. Local treatment has included ichthyol, glycerin, belladonna, and tinct. iodi in various strengths. Surgical measures are contraindicated; no "specific" history; heart, lungs, and urine normal.

### Income Tax

#### Replacement of Books and Use of Car

"T. H." holds a county council appointment as A.M.O., and receives 3½d. per mile for travelling expenses. He inquires as to claims for deduction of the cost of replacing technical books, and such motor expenses as tax, insurance, and depreciation.

\* The emoluments of the employment are assessable under Schedule E, and "T. H." must show that the expenses he seeks to deduct are "wholly exclusively and necessarily" in the carrying out of the duties of his office. The position with regard to the books is that, where the local authority requires the medical officer to maintain a reference library, the cost of keeping it up to date is allowed, but not otherwise, the expense being regarded as incurred not in the carrying out of the duties, but in maintaining personal competence to carry them out. With regard to the car expenses, he can claim only the excess of his "necessary" expenses over the amount of the mileage allowance—for example, if a better or larger car than is necessary is used the claim would have to be restricted accordingly. In effect, any such claim must be tantamount to alleging that the county allowance is inadequate—usually a very difficult matter to establish to other people's satisfaction. The colleague to whom "T. H." refers, who has had deduction for motor expenses, may possibly have done so owing to some misunderstanding on the part of the income tax officials as to whether he receives a mileage allowance.

## LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

### Convalescent Serum in Poliomyelitis

At a conference in Linz last autumn, Professor Stiefler and others gave an account of the geographical and age distribution and general epidemiology of poliomyelitis.<sup>1</sup> In Upper Austria between 1909 and 1913 153 attacks occurred with 15 per cent. mortality, while in 1931 288 were notified with an 8 per cent. mortality. Since approximately 1,000 infections a year occur also in Germany, leaving some 500 invalids, the need for the administration of serum in the earliest stage was strongly urged, though its uselessness after paralysis had occurred was pointed out. In one instance only eleven doses of convalescent serum were asked for by practitioners in a year, though this number represented but a fraction of the attacks. The need for organization of supplies of convalescent serum and of arrangement for emergency distribution by train or aeroplane was emphasized. Supplies of convalescent serum are kept at various centres, and it is available also from certain serum-producing firms. Following convalescent serum the blood of convalescents and finally the blood of relatives is commended. Human convalescent serum and Pettit's antiserum had been used, but the numbers were admittedly too small to justify definite deductions about the efficacy of treatment.

### Treatment of Impetigo

Dr. E. M. R. FRAZER (Burton-on-Trent), after referring to recent articles in the *Journal* on this subject, especially on the use of elastoplast, writes: It may not be generally known that a cellulose seccotine (rawplug durofix) gives very good results, particularly where the lesion is situated on parts constantly subject to movement—that is, the interdigital folds, and corner of the mouth and of the nose. The seccotine is applied direct from the tube, and dries in a few seconds. When dry it is invisible, pliable, and waterproof, even to hot water. A second application may be necessary next day. I do not think that harmful effects may be expected, as amyl acetate, which is used in cosmetic nail polishes, is apparently the base. Healing is rapid, but the crusts should be removed before application.

### Injection of Varicose Veins

Dr. H. R. BARRETT (Queensland, Australia), in reply to Dr. George Gillett's inquiry in the *Journal* of April 22nd (p. 729) as to whether any reader had had any experience of extensive clotting after injection of varicose veins, writes: I injected the right saphenous vein just above the knee with quinine and urethane solution in a melancholic patient. Four days later the whole of the saphenous vein from the foot upwards was thrombosed. In addition to that there was considerable oedema of the foot and leg. He was treated with rest and firm bandaging, but the oedema lasted about three months before clearing. A second case which I saw had been injected by a friend of mine. This time the injection was below the knee. The sequel to the injection was very similar to that of the above case.

### Medical Golf

Last year a new medical society was started in the Rugeley district, and Mr. Nesfield Cookson presented a cup for competition among the golfing members. The competition took place on July 2nd on the Brocton Hall golf course, when the principal scores were: Dr. Torrance (89-18), 71; Dr. C. N. Smith (86-14), 72; Dr. Frazer (88-10), 78; Dr. Gilchrist (85-7), 78.

### The Late Dr. R. W. Innes Smith

Professor ARTHUR J. HALL writes: In my obituary notice of the late Dr. Innes Smith, published by you on May 27th, I stated that he presented an "engraving" of Sir Charles Scarborough to the College of Physicians. I find now that, as a matter of fact, it was a large oil painting, which hangs in a prominent position in the entrance hall of the College to-day.

### 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, 44, 45, 48, and 49 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 46 and 47.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 32.

<sup>1</sup> *Wien. klin. Woch.*, May 12th, 1933.