

Letters, Notes, and Answers

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Hyperidrosis

"UNCOMFORTABLE" writes: Could any reader suggest treatment for very excessive axillary perspiration, equally bad on warm or cold days, and infinitely more unpleasant and chilling on the latter. No abnormal perspiration elsewhere, and general health very good.

Pigmentation of Scalp and Hair

"B.D.V." writes: I have a male patient, aged 60, whose scalp and part of his hair have assumed a brown colour like a nitric acid stain. I have been unable to ascertain the cause, either external or internal, and would welcome any suggestion as to cause and treatment.

Aphthae

"J. D." asks for suggestions in the treatment and prevention of recurring aphthous patches in the mouth.

Winter Underwear

"NORTH LONDON" inquires about the best material for winter underwear. Recently he saw a copy of instructions given to a mother whose small son was attending the asthma clinic at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Under the head of clothing, it said that silk, or silk-and-cotton mixture, was preferable to wool for the vests of these children. He wonders if the same holds good for the ordinary individual, who would like to minimize as much as possible the risk of contracting colds, coughs, etc.

"Pulex ubiqutis"

"TRAINED NURSE" suggests that if "Hopeful" will sprinkle turpentine on his underwear and bedclothes (including the mattress) daily, he will find within a week that he provides "a less attractive meal" for the fleas.

Income Tax

Various Expenses

"W.W." has, during the past financial year, acted as house-physician, ship surgeon, and resident medical officer at a convalescent home. He inquires whether he can deduct (a) cost of uniform (£28 10s.) as ship surgeon, (b) entrance fee for Final M.B. examination, and (c) fee for correspondence tuition.

** (a) We understand that there is an agreed annual rate of allowance for cost of uniforms worn by ship surgeons. It is apparently intended to cover extra rather than total cost, but we believe there is no bar to a claim for the first year's outlay. We suggest that "W.W." might call the attention of the inspector of taxes to this special arrangement—no doubt it applies to mercantile marine officers generally—and ask him to reconsider his views. (b) and (c) These are not allowable; they are expenses incurred to obtain a qualification, and not actually in the performance of the duties of the office or employment.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

"Hair-drill," an Adjunct to "Deep Breathing"

Sir JAMES DUNDAS-GRANT (London, W.) writes: As an adjunct to "deep breathing" I would recommend the practice of what was once boomed as "hair-drill." In this the arms are raised above the head while the tips of the fingers exercise discreet massage of the scalp, rubbing in some form of emollient such as diluted lanoline. The late Sir Hermann Weber insisted on the value of exercises with the arms raised above the head, and this hair-drill may be found a not unattractive method of putting this principle into practice. I am sure my fellow-practitioners must have realized the value of Sir Hermann's recommendation, and I hope they will find my suggestion helpful in inducing their patients to adopt it.

"Drawing the Pillow"

Dr. MARK R. TAYLOR (Southampton) writes: Dr. David Rorie, whose "Nova et Vetera" article under the title "Hastening the Death of the Aged, Infirm, and Sick," appeared in your issue of September 30th (p. 611), might like to know that such a custom existed in mid-Norfolk in recent times. A doctor, who is still in practice there, told me he had met with two instances of the hastening of the death of old people who lay too long adying. The method employed was to draw away the pillow and allow the sick person's head to fall back. In one case my friend remonstrated with an old woman who he believed had just helped a sufferer out of the world, and told her it was murder. Her reply was: "Oh no, Sir, it's not murder; it's what we call 'drawing the pillow.'" He was also told by a district nurse that she had come across a similar case in South Lancashire. The practice seems to be used only in the case of persons who take an unconscionable time to die, and have worn out the patience of all around them. Dr. Rorie's illustrations are based on tribal traditions—mine only on impatience.

"WING COMMANDER R.A.F.M.S." writes from Malta: I was much interested in Dr. D. Rorie's article under "Nova et Vetera" in the *Journal* of September 30th. Some nations still carry on similar customs to the present day. I well remember, during the second Balkan war in 1912, an aged Montenegrin staggering into my dressing station late one night and telling us that he was just about to place a bomb under the Turkish wire prior to an attack in the morning. We asked him why he had been selected for such dangerous work, and he said, "Oh, old man, life no use." Discussing the incident afterwards we thought it was rather brutal, but that in a nation whose man power was limited it was sound common sense.

Nucleotide

MENLEY AND JAMES, LTD. (64, Hatton Garden, E.C.1), write: On pages 577-8 of the *Journal* of September 23rd you refer to the treatment of agranulocytosis by means of "nucleotide K-96." To save confusion, we think we should explain that, at the request of the American Medical Association, the name of this preparation was changed to pentnucleotide. We hold the only stocks in Europe of this preparation, on behalf of its manufacturers, Messrs. Smith, Kline, and French Laboratories of Philadelphia.

A Testimonial

Dr. J. S. CRONE (High Sheriff of Middlesex) informs us of an influential movement now afoot among music lovers to present a testimonial to Alicia Adélaide Needham, the distinguished Irish composer. Mrs. Needham is the widow of Dr. Joseph Needham, a well-known practitioner in London, who died in 1920. For many years she occupied a high position in the musical world, as a composer of some 700 Irish songs, song-cycles, marches, hymns, etc. Contributions may be sent to Dr. Crone at the Irish Literary Society (39, Grosvenor Place, S.W.1).

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, 52, 53, and 56 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 54 and 55.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 207.