

the irritant properties of the pure chemical. The reason why brown soft sugar is more digestible than the white is that the brown is much less refined than the white; the browner it is the cruder and the more digestible.

European Children in the Tropics

Dr. NICOL (Carshalton), in reply to Dr. James Gardner (*Journal*, December 1st, p. 1025), writes: Dutch women can stand the climate in Java no better than can English women. The first Dutch settlers married native women. Later settlers married, resulting in half- and quarter-casts. At present the "casts" approximating to European type are much sought after by thrifty Dutchmen as being wives who can stand the climate and produce children who can do the same. A Javanese half-cast woman of European type has a high opinion of herself, and rates herself equal to a white woman. This policy was encouraged by the Dutch Government, and is now reaping its own reward in the form of a mixed Dutch-Javanese population outnumbering the pure Dutch and only too anxious to govern itself. This problem is outside Dr. Gardner's inquiry, but I trust my explanation will be of help.

Dr. MAUD C. CAIRNEY writes from Bordighera: The Dutch women and children in Java and Sumatra struck me as looking healthier than their British neighbours in the Federated Malay States. They don't, however, stay in the coast towns all the year round, but go up for a change of climate to the excellent hill stations which are to be found at a height of 5,000 to 6,000 feet in both Java and Sumatra. In the F.M.S. the hill stations are lower and wetter, and the accommodation available cannot be compared with the efficiently run Dutch hotels. That difference alone has a lot to do with the maintenance or loss of health. Both in Java and Sumatra there are schools in these hill stations where children can be sent. The Dutch also live more comfortably than the British in Malaya when they are in the coast towns. Their houses are screened to keep out mosquitos, whereas in the F.M.S. screened houses are rare. They have a great variety of vegetables, grown on their hills; in Malaya it was impossible up to 1932, when I left, to get any variety in vegetables.

Solution of Bismuth Salts in Oil

"WANG" (London, S.E.20) writes: Bismuth sodium potassium tartrate is used for intramuscular injection in oil. The oil must be sterilized at 115° C. for a certain time. But how is this substance dissolved in the oil? It does not dissolve hot, cold, or ground in bit by bit. Is there any book which tells *how* it is dissolved? The injection is very painful when given in water.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Antitoxin for Puerperal Sepsis

Dr. HENRY J. THOMSON (physician-superintendent, County Maternity Hospital, Bellshill) writes: I have just observed that in Professor Munro Kerr's book, *Maternal Mortality and Morbidity*, 1933, the County Maternity Hospital, Bellshill, is referred to on page 226, stating that "masks and gloves as well as antitoxin are employed in Bellshill," and a footnote stating that an outbreak of sepsis occurred in this institution in 1932. These statements are not accurate, and may be misleading to those who desire to prove the usefulness of antitoxin. The first case of the epidemic occurred on November 4th, 1932, and the administration of antitoxin was suspended from September 7th of the same year. I shall be pleased if you will kindly allow space for this correction in your next issue.

The Microscope in Modern Life

The microscope slide has evidently not lost its fascination, even for a generation accustomed to spectacular displays in picture theatres: witness the queues of interested people who followed one another on a round of a hundred microscopes throughout last week at the Central Hall, Westminster. John Milton, in *Paradise Regained*, wrote of the fair edifices to be seen in the "aery microscope"—surely almost the first reference to the microscope in literature (1655)—and certainly in such an assemblage of instruments there were "fair edifices" in plenty, which it was hard to believe were only the spinneret of the spider or the plumed palpi of the gnat. The exhibition was designed to illustrate the value of the microscope in recreation and education, and its indispensability, indeed, in research and industry. The industrial applications are manifold, and the microscope plays an essential part in the production of motor-car engines, the testing of steels, and the analysis of foods. A section of the exhibition was given up to specimens of medical or bacteriological interest, such as

the small fibres of asbestos in the lung of a mine worker, a section of kidney showing anthrax infection, and so forth. The exhibition was arranged by Messrs. W. Watson and Sons, Ltd., assisted by the Quekett Microscopical Club—the largest amateur microscopical society in the world—the Photomicrographic Society, and Kodak Limited. For those interested in the microscope itself, apart from what it reveals, there were demonstrations of the methods of illumination and the manufacture of lenses.

Science and Religion

Dr. H. G. BAYNES (London, N.W.1) writes: The chorus of protest that has been aroused by Dr. David Forsyth's presidential address at the Psychiatric Section of the Royal Society of Medicine is not untimely. The psycho-analytical attack on religion can claim no kinship with the genuine spirit of scientific scepticism. It is a kind of fascism of the intellect that is shielded from its own doubts by a certain primitive *naïveté*. For primitive mentality is likewise peculiarly prone to assume that analogous things are, *ipsi facto*, identical. The use of analogy in psychological investigation has exactly the same technical justification as the use of dye stains in histology. For, without the application of appropriate mythological stains and associative analogies, many of the products of unconscious mental activity would be indecipherable. But Freud himself, in company with most of his followers, has regularly taken the symptom or dream material thus treated as being, thereby, proved to be identical with the mythic analogue. Certain features of the parent-child constellation suggested the application of the famous Oedipus stain, while certain characters of religious feeling were obviously inspired by the archetype of the human family. In the former case the analogy of the infantile attitude to the parents with the antique mythic pattern is held to prove that every child is caught in the fatal pit of incest, while in the latter the continuity of the primal condition of infancy with the deepest sources of religious feeling is taken to prove that religious experience is nothing but reproduced infantile fantasy. A primitive, idiomatic mode of expression can never be understood by minds that mistake analogy for concrete fact. The complacency which accompanies this type of rationalization is particularly infuriating, because although the reasoning purports to be the modest voice of scientific agnosticism it is at bottom the expression of a primitive belief in the infallibility of the deductive scientific method as such. The Freudian method is certainly deductive, but are the deductions made in the spirit of science? The misuse of method is a matter of real scientific concern. It can be unwitting, like the case of the examination candidate who was perfectly certain that the tubercle bacillus was a red microbe because he had actually seen it under the microscope. The fallacy, then, does not lie in the use of the analogical method, but rather in a superstitious adherence to the deductive technique, as though the employment of a certain style of reasoning absolved one from all inquiry into the validity of one's premisses. This characteristic Freudian fallacy has done incalculable injury, even though medical psychology owes an immense debt to Freud for his invaluable clinical discoveries. Psychological research would undoubtedly gain a new and vigorous impetus in this country if a fully equipped scientific survey could be carried out with the aim of salvaging the valuable grains of fact from the welter of fallacious inference.

Ingrowing Toe-nail

A Correction

Dr. P. F. CHAPMAN (Taynuilt) writes: In my letter on the above subject in the *Journal* of December 8th (p. 1073), the words "treated by this method" in the last paragraph should be omitted. The method of treatment is not the cause of the suppuration, but is the quickest way of curing it.

Fourteen British teachers of cookery have written a booklet for the housewife called "Christmas Fare." Over fifty recipes are given, and the preparation of every dish is described in detail. Copies may be obtained gratis from almost every gas undertaking, or direct from the British Commercial Gas Association, 28, Grosvenor Gardens, 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 33, 34, 35, and 38 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 36 and 37.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 304.