

full play ; secondly, and rather morbidly, by the exhibition of people in barrels or glass cases ; and thirdly by indirect manifestations of masculine strength.

### Use and Abuse of Examinations

On Monday, September 14th, in the same Section, the reform of the examination system was discussed. Professor MADISON BENTLEY, an American visitor from Cornell University, who took the chair, described the subject as peculiar to the British educational system. Dr. LL. WYNN JONES of Leeds University described examinations as a part of real life, an institution which society had evolved to solve specific social problems. The system was one which implied flexibility and compromise, and should not be impeded by laxity and abuse on the one hand and cast-iron pig-headedness on the other. He suggested that there should be an increased use of standardized tests of intelligence ; there was need of a sufficient number of psychological testers adequately trained in the technique of examining. Further large-scale researches such as those initiated in Leeds a year ago—to compare the prognostic values of tests of intelligence, tests of special abilities, tests of attainment, school records, teachers' estimates, etc.—were necessary.

Professor H. R. HAMLEY of the Institute of Education said that we had never clearly formulated our examination aims, or if we had we had lost sight of them. The school-leaving certificate was accepted by the business world as a guarantee that a boy or girl had attained a certain cultural standard, by the university as an indication that he or she would profit by a higher education. These views were not necessarily incompatible, but public examinations varied enormously in the degree with which they fulfilled these two criteria. School certificate examinations should include tests of knowledge acquired, measuring honest but modest attainment in certain fundamental subjects, and tests of educable capacity, measuring also aptitude or specific ability in a subject of the candidate's choice. In conclusion Professor Hamley pleaded for broad and comprehensive research on the problems of examinations and the conscientious application of the results obtained.

### Modern Civilization

On September 15th, in opening a discussion on the strain of modern civilization, Lord HORDER said that strain was the penalty we paid for living at all, but there was implicit in the title of the discussion the suggestion that the strain of modern life had new elements and was excessive. Functional disease, as against organic, had increased. In case after case a tactful pursuit after fundamental causes revealed headache, insomnia, indigestion, and fatigue as being due to an anxiety factor. The competition of living, the increasing sense of international insecurity, the pace at which we lived, and the precariousness of life itself were all such that in these days we seemed to live by accident rather than to die by it. Science was held largely responsible for much of the strain of modern life. Actually it was not too much science, but too little ; science had loaded man with benefits, but he had shown an indifference to them or a carelessness and a prodigality in the use of them which was pathetic. We need not drive a car so fast that it killed, nor make a loud-speaker so loud that it deafened. Science was made for man, not man for science, and the one thing that mattered was control. Among remedies for the ill effects of the strain of modern life he placed first more science, and especially science directed toward the study and development of the mind and spirit of man. There was little hope for the people in mass movements, whether fascist or communist. When individual freedom had been sacrificed he saw no chance of achieving that control in the spiritual sphere from which alone he believed salvation could come to the human race. In conclusion, Lord Horder said that he had not attempted a prognosis of modern ills. He had only restated his faith in the individual and in the enormous potentialities of the human spirit. If doctors had a political colour it must needs be

liberal. He spoke without prejudice, but thought that a rebirth of that spirit in British political life would be one of the best medicines that our strained lives could have administered to them.

### Nervous Breakdown

Dr. R. D. GILLESPIE spoke of modern civilization in its relation to nervous and mental breakdown. An analysis of 500 consecutive cases of nervous and mental illness showed that overwork, to which such breakdowns were often attributed, was an important or causal factor in only ten instances, or 2 per cent. Usually the causes were more personal and had to do less with external stress or strain than with personal unhappiness and mental conflict. Overwork without personal satisfaction from it tended to produce functional nervous breakdowns. Unemployment was not such a frequent factor in producing breakdown as one would expect. What was required as a rule was not a diminution in the pace of life, but a better technique of living, which implied a better type of education and upbringing.

Dr. E. P. POULTON thought that there were two opposing factors in modern strain. The first factor, which increased the strain, was the rise in the standard of living, and the second, which should diminish it, was that the luxuries, no less than the necessities of life, were requiring fewer people and shorter hours for their manufacture, so that there was more spare time available. The fault lay in the failure of distribution and in defective education, so that those who had leisure were often unable to profit from it. In England and Wales the last time "the net reproductive rate" was above 1 was in 1925. In 1933 the rate had been reckoned as not much above 0.75 (Dr. Enid Charles). The average family should contain 3.1 children of both sexes to make a stationary population. In considering diet Dr. Poulton said most adults had a tendency to overfeed. Most people tended to put on weight as they became middle-aged. Was this physiological or should a man of 50 preserve his youthful weight and figure? The effects of tobacco and alcohol were considered, and Dr. Poulton suggested that the variability of the content of alcohol in a cocktail was its main disadvantage as compared with a glass of sherry or beer.

### Modern Industry

Miss E. M. KILICK contributed a paper on some health hazards from toxic substances in modern industrial civilization. She regarded carbon monoxide as one of the most important of these substances, because it was the most frequently encountered. The list of toxic products and by-products to which workers might be exposed during industrial processes increased almost daily. Prolonged exposure even to very low concentrations of toxic gases was thought to be a factor in reducing the normal reserve capacity of the body in response to unusual strains.

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As previously announced this fund is now closed, and the following is a final list of subscriptions:

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## Letters, Notes, and Answers

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### QUERIES AND ANSWERS

#### Facial Eruption

**Dr. GLADYS MONTGOMERY** (Auckland, New Zealand) writes: I would be very grateful for any suggestions with regard to the treatment of a troublesome facial skin condition. The sweat glands seem to be overactive, and unless under constant treatment the face is disfigured with countless little cream pin-points of greasy-looking secretion. These actually become so offensive in odour as to be an annoyance to the patient. At intervals the face shows a marked, blotchy, acne-like eruption. The skin is never smooth; the enlarged sweat-gland openings give it a coarse appearance. The electric needle has been suggested, but the specialist did not guarantee a cure. Astringent and stimulating lotions have been applied.

#### Income Tax

##### Expense of Locumtenent

"**FAITHLIE**" employs his son as locumtenent, and has claimed to deduct £2 2s. per week for cost of maintenance. The inspector of taxes refuses to allow more than £1 1s. per week, on the ground that no additional cost is incurred in connexion with the general expenses of the establishment.

\*\* The fact that the locumtenent is the son of the practitioner makes no difference, and the inspector's argument would be equally effective or otherwise in normal circumstances. He takes his stand on the ground that only additional costs can be allowed—that is, expenses which would not be incurred if the locumtenent were not resident on the professional premises. In our view that is fallacious; the true basis is the proper sharing of the general household expenses throughout the year. Suppose, for example, that the agreed ratio of private to professional use is half and half, and that the practitioner takes a month's holiday. During that month the practitioner is deriving comparatively little benefit from his establishment, but is still debited with half cost in the accounts. That is correct; but only so long as the expense of providing the locumtenent takes into account not only "additional" expense, but also a reasonable ratio of the general cost of maintenance of the establishment. Otherwise the Revenue would be "getting it both ways."

### LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

#### The Lonely Underpaid Woman Worker

*Consider Her Palaces*, by Miss Rosamond Tweedy, is "a study of the housing problem of lower-paid single women workers in London." This booklet is published at sixpence by the Over Thirty Association (109, Great Russell Street, W.C.1), of which the author is organizing secretary, in the hope of

stimulating the authorities to make some better provision for this type of worker in new housing schemes. In a short introduction Sir Ernest Simon, who has done so much to improve housing conditions in Manchester, points out that this aspect of the problem has so far been completely neglected. The living conditions of 239 women in middle life, all entirely dependent on an earned income averaging 35s. a week, formed the subject of a special inquiry. The majority of these women were clerical workers, some of them University graduates, but manual workers were also included. The greater number lived in single rooms, chiefly in the central districts of London, rooms which too often were dilapidated, inconvenient, and depressing, and for which the rental was unduly high in proportion to the occupant's income. The author comes to the conclusion that the provision of one-room flatlets for this type of worker, at a reasonably low rental, subsidized either by the State or by local bodies, is an urgent necessity. The possession of a home, however modest, would greatly ameliorate the living conditions of these women, whose lot is often undeservedly hard.

#### Radiography

*Kodak X-Ray Manual* (London, Kodak Ltd., 1936) is a useful little production, not a catalogue of apparatus, but a treatise in short compass on the theory and practice of radiography. There are chapters on the x-ray generating apparatus, exposure factors, and shadow formation, and then some more specific instruction on the use of intensifying screens, the handling of film, the design of the dark room (with a plea for light and cheerful colours for the walls, not the psychologically depressing black or red), the process of development, and the viewing of the radiograph. The text is assisted by some excellent diagrams conveying instruction on the physics of the subject, often so difficult to grasp without this aid. Frequent reference is made, naturally, to Kodak productions, but all radiographers, and radiologists too, whatever materials and accessories they use, will find many practical suggestions in these chapters.

#### Empire Health Week

The Health and Cleanliness Council has issued a poster entitled "The Safe Way to Health," which is intended for wide distribution during Empire Health Week, October 4th to 10th. A limited number of specimen copies are available, and application should be made to the Council at 5, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

#### Medical Missionaries

In the Educational Number of the *Journal* (September 5th, p. 492) we drew attention to the urgent need for medical men and women in the mission fields abroad. We are asked to state that full information on this matter can be obtained from the secretaries of the various missionary societies, from the Recruiting Secretary, Student Christian Movement, Annandale, North End Road, N.11, or from the secretary of the Conference of British Missionary Societies, 2, Eaton Gate, S.W.1.

#### London College of Dietetics Ltd.: A Disclaimer

Lord Horder desires it to be known that he is not a member of the Advisory Council of the London College of Dietetics Ltd., and is not in any manner interested in or concerned with this organization.

#### The Theory of Emulsions: A Correction

We regret that the number of pages and the price were wrongly stated in the footnote to the review of Dr. William Clayton's book, *The Theory of Emulsions and their Technical Treatment*, which appeared in our issue of September 12th (p. 540). The book consists of 458 pages and is published at 25s.; not at 12s. 6d.

#### Corrigendum

Glaxo Laboratories Ltd. ask us to correct an error in the advertisement they supplied and which appeared in our issue of September 12th. The iron content of ostermilk No. 2 was described as being "five pints per million" instead of "five parts per million."

#### 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, 52, 53, 54, 55, and 58 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 56 and 57.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 179.