Correspondence

Contagion and Consistency

To the Editor:—We are going through a period of health revival and it is good to look a little at our inconsistencies: we may derive benefit from so doing. We all admire the noble, scientific and disinterested work done by investigators. From their researches we know how diseases are disseminated, carried through or by this or that insect; we understand the germ theory and the methods of proliferation of these parasites. We wage war on disease by waging war on flies, mosquitoes, rats, etc. We are extremely careful about keeping everything clean around us—at least we believe we are. Laws have been passed to quarantine (?) infected people or cause a segregation of diseased from healthy ones. In large cities isolation hospitals have been built and their construction for small towns is being agitated.

To all appearances we could well rest on the work done; but let us see to it that books, newspapers, magazines, etc., do not accumulate on tables in our waiting-rooms, because of the danger of skin and other diseases being carried from one patient to another. Having done this we could work towards having a complete sterilization of all public library books as soon as returned. Clothing and other fomites are great carriers of infection; infected clothing that has been unused for years has been the cause of epidemics. Why not, therefore, make it compulsory for physicians to wear special clothes when attending cases of contagious disease? Such clothing could be made of material easily disinfected before being worn from house to house. Did we thus set a good example ourselves and show more consistency, quarantine regulations, which in very many places are a farce, could be more easily enforced.

EMILE ROY, M.D., Wausau, Wis.

Filter Paper Test for Bile in Gastric Contents

To the Editor:—Since the publication of my article entitled "A Delicate Test for Bile in the Gastric Contents," in THE JOURNAL, May 20, 1909, p. 1758, my attention has been called to Rosenbach's test for bile in the urine. This consists in filtering the urine several times through the same filter paper and applying nitrous acid to the filter paper after drying, to obtain the reaction for bile. I have never used the Rosenbach test for bile in the urine, but, working entirely independently of that method or other methods, I have found that the filter paper test for bile in gastric contents as described by me, will detect the presence of bile, when no reaction for bile will be obtained when nitrous acid is applied to the filtered gastric contents themselves.

ALBERT WOLDERT, M.D., Tyler, Texas.

Queries and Minor Notes

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS will not be noticed. Every letter must contain the writer's name and address, but these will be omitted, on request.

HYPODERMATIC ADMINISTRATION OF PURGATIVES

To the Editor:—What medicine can be used hypodermatically as a purgative? C. M. WASSELL, Tillar, Ark.

ANSWER.—Podophyllo-toxin, aloin, cathartic acid, colocynthin, and citrullin are capable of producing purgation when administered hypodermatically, but they are all too irritant for practical use. Physostigmin is also not safe or satisfactory. Apocodein appears to be the only known substance which has practical value for this purpose. It produces soft but not numerous or very watery stools. From 0.02 to 0.06 gm. ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 grain) of the hydrochlorate may be injected with proper antiseptic precaution. The dilution should be from 3 to 1 per cent. It sometimes produces distinct irritation at the place of injection.

TENOTOMY FOR PIANISTS

To the Editor:—Please give some information about tenotomy as used to increase or allow freer movements of the "ring" finger in musicians. What results, if any, have thus been accomplished? J. H. H., Chicago.

ANSWER: Formerly the bands connecting the extensor tendon of the ring finger to those of the little and middle fingers were frequently divided by either the open or the closed method. One or both were cut, depending on the freedom of motion desired and on the amount of faith placed in the procedure. The results were disappointing as no greater increase in freedom of motion was obtained. The best evidence of the inefficiency of this procedure is the fact that the operation is now rarely performed.

The Public Service

Medical Department of the Army

Changes of stations and duties of medical officers, during the week ended July 17, 1909:

Le Wald, Leon T., capt., granted leave of absence for 25 days.
Gosman, George H. R., capt., granted leave of absence for one month, August 1st.
Shaw, Henry A., major, granted leave of absence for one month.
Loving, Robert C., capt., granted leave of absence for four months.
Birmingham, Henry P., lieutenant-col., granted leave of absence for two months.
Lafamme, Frank L. K., dental surgeon, ordered to Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois, for temporary duty.
Ames, John R., dental surgeon, granted leave of absence for one month.
Ryan, Edward P. R., dental surgeon, relieved from duty at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and ordered to Fort D. A. Russell, Wyo., for duty.

Medical Corps of the Navy

Changes for the week ended July 17, 1909:

Smith, H. W., P. A. surgeon, detached from duty at the Naval Medical School Hospital, Washington, D. C., and ordered to temporary duty at the navy yard, Boston.
Reeves, I. S. K., P. A. surgeon, ordered to treatment at the Naval Medical School Hospital, Washington, D. C.
Odell, H. E., surgeon, detached from the Naval Hospital, Mare Island, Cal., and ordered to the Naval Station, Guam, M. I.
Angenry, G. L., surgeon, detached from the Naval Station, Guam, M. I., and ordered home to await orders.
Winn, C. K., asst.-surgeon, detached from the Naval Hospital, Newport, R. I., and ordered to the Naval Station, Key West, Fla.

Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service

List of changes of stations and duties of commissioned and other officers of the Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service for the seven days ended July 14:

Bailhache, P. H., surgeon, granted three months' leave of absence from Aug. 1, 1909.
Gasaway, J. M., surgeon, directed to proceed to Tuckerton and Atlantic City, N. J., for the purpose of examining keepers and surfmen of the life saving service.
Guiteras, G. M., surgeon, directed to proceed to Austin and other points in Texas on special temporary duty.
Wickes, H. W., passed assistant surgeon, granted one month's leave of absence from Aug. 1, 1909.
Cumming, Hugh S., passed assistant surgeon, granted one month's leave of absence from Aug. 1, 1909.
Clark, T., passed assistant surgeon, granted thirty days' leave of absence from Aug. 16, 1909.
Bahrenburg, L. P. H., passed assistant surgeon, directed to proceed to Point Pleasant, N. J., for the purpose of examining keepers and surfmen of the life saving service, July 12, 1909; granted fifteen days' leave of absence from Aug. 1, 1909.
Warren, B. S., passed assistant surgeon, granted three days' leave of absence from July 6, 1909.
Ebersole, R. E., passed assistant surgeon, granted six days' leave of absence from March 6, 1909. Paragraph 191 Service Regulations.

Roberts, Norman, passed assistant surgeon, directed to proceed to Ocean City, Md., and Chincoteague, Wachapreague and Cape Charles City, Va., for the purpose of examining keepers and surfmen of the life saving service.

Mullan, Eugene H., passed assistant surgeon, granted two days' leave of absence from July 12, 1909.

Preble, Paul, assistant surgeon, relieved from duty at Baltimore, Md., and directed to report at Bureau for duty; assigned for duty in charge of the miscellaneous division.

Hunt, Reid, chief, division of pharmacology, hygienic laboratory, detailed to attend the twelfth international congress on alcoholism to be held in London, July 18-24, 1909, and the sixteenth international medical congress to be held in Budapest, Hungary, Aug. 29-Sept. 4, 1909.

Earl, F. D., acting assistant surgeon, granted seven days' leave of absence from July 20, 1909.

O'Reilly, W. J., acting assistant surgeon, granted ten days' leave of absence from July 27, 1909.

Safford, M. V., acting assistant surgeon, granted seven days' leave of absence from July 7, 1909. Paragraph 210 Service Regulations. Granted three days' leave of absence from July 15, 1909.

Schmitt, L. S., acting assistant surgeon, granted thirty days' leave of absence from July 2, 1909, without pay.

Storrs, Henry R., acting assistant surgeon, granted four days' leave of absence from July 20, 1909.

Tarbell, B. C., acting assistant surgeon, granted thirty days' leave of absence from Aug. 1, 1909, with pay, and fourteen days' leave from Aug. 31, 1909, without pay.

Weeks, Alanson, acting assistant surgeon, granted thirty days' leave of absence from July 10, 1909.

Weldon, Wm. A., acting assistant surgeon, granted one month's leave of absence from Aug. 15, 1909.

APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Walter R. Brinckerhoff reinstated and appointed assistant director of the leprosy investigation station at Molokai, T. H.