nearly as high a rate as the Canadians had when they first landed in England.

The following paragraph I copy literally from the *Times* of May 22nd, 1920, to show what a false impression truthful figures can make:—

VENEREAL DISEASE IN THE ARMY.

Mr. Churchill, in a written answer to Captain Elliot, states that the approximate ratios per 1000 of admissions for venereal disease in the British Army are as follows:—United Kingdom: 1918, 43; 1919, 59; first quarter, 1920, 148. France: 1918, 32; 1919, 67; first quarter, 1920, 40.5. Army of the Rhine: 1919, 46; first quarter, 1920, 42.3. The ratios for 1919 and 1920 are to a large extent fallacious, he adds, owing to rapid demobilisation. The latest information shows some improvement in France and Germany.

Now the rates quoted herein for France for 1918 and 1919 are apparently annual rates, and the rate for 1920 is a quarterly rate, hence comparative rates per 1000 per annum are: 1918, 32; 1919, 67, or is it 268? 1920, 40.5×4 , 162. The Rhine rates are, apparently, per 1000 per annum: 1919, 184; 1920, 169 (March quarter), and on May 22nd Mr. Churchill says there is "some improvement," the "improvement" being a rise to 215 per 1000 per annum for the June quarter, 1920! Now what are the actual facts?—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

ETTIE A. ROUT,

Late Hon. Sec., New Zealand Volunteer Sisters.

March 18th, 1921.

DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT, 1920.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—“A Member,” writing in your issue of March 19th, suggests that I may be mistaken if my letter, which appeared in your columns of the 12th, intended to imply that “the Council of the London and Counties Medical Protection Society voices the medical opinions of the society’s contributors, inasmuch as they are not in any way consulted.” It is, of course, impossible to take a referendum of members on every subject that comes before the Council of the society, but members are, I think, quite well aware that the opinion of any individual member, if communicated to the Council, receives careful consideration. The great majority of the members of Council and all the officers are elected annually, and are therefore as representative as is possible of the members of the society. Moreover, at the annual meeting (which this year will fall on April 6th) every member who cares to attend can express his opinion on the policy of the Council.

As regards the proposed Regulations under the Dangerous Drugs Act, 1920, I am not aware that any member of the society differs from the unanimous opinion of the Council, and I note that “A Member” himself does not express any disagreement. Of course, it is very seldom that 6000 members of a society will be in absolute agreement on any particular point, but in this case I am not at present aware of any disagreement whatsoever.

We should be very glad to hear from any members of the society who have formed any opinion on the subject. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

HUGH WOODS,

General Secretary, The London and Counties Medical Protection Society, Ltd.

Craven-street, Strand, W.C., March 18th, 1921.

ANALYSIS OF THE GASTRIC CONTENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. J. H. Ryffel’s paper on this subject in your issue of March 19th gives an incorrect account of the technique suggested by Dr. W. J. Adie and myself and published in THE LANCET of Feb. 26th. Mr. Ryffel states that “recently Cole and Adie have urged the use of thymol-blue working to an end-point, =HCl.N $\times 10^{-2.6}$, or about N/500.”

I had hoped that we had made it quite clear that it is not possible to get correct results from free HCl if one works to a reaction more alkaline than about N/100. He goes on to state that “this indicator would leave a large gap between the total acidity and the free HCl so that it would surely be better to retain dimethyl.” I completely fail to see why a large gap is undesirable, since it undoubtedly exists in a great many cases.

I maintain that our technique gives an exact measure of the free HCl and therefore of the actual

hydrogen-ion concentration of the gastric contents. Dimethyl gives the whole of the free HCl and an unknown fraction of the combined HCl. If it gave the whole of this combined HCl its use might be defended, but since it gives a figure which nobody can possibly evaluate, it is unfortunate that its use should be advocated by a scientist of Mr. Ryffel’s reputation.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Biochemical Laboratory, Cambridge, SYDNEY W. COLE.
March 22nd, 1921.

TREATMENT FOR INTERNAL CANCER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Since August, 1916, I have been treating with apparent success cases of internal cancer, as diagnosed clinically, as they occurred in general practice. This fact, and the contrasted failure of my treatment of many cases of external cancer with the same remedy suggest to me a new clue in the treatment of cancer. I believe that carcinoma is almost, if not always, associated with some form of rheumatism which yields to a course of alum taken internally. The effect is not observed in the subjects of external cancer associated with a gouty disposition, and I have found that cancer of the rectum, anus, and bladder does not respond to this treatment. The prescription which I recommended is:—

R	Alum sulphate	...	...	...	...	...	gr. ii.
	Mag. carb. levis	...	...	...	...	...	gr. v.
	Potass. citrat.	...	...	...	...	...	gr. v.
	Tr. opii	...	...	...	...	...	m iii.
	Aq. chloroformi	...	...	...	...	...	5 ii.
	Aq. ad	...	...	...	...	...	3 i.
	3 i. t.d.s.						

30 drops of liq. bismuthi et ammon. citrat. being added in the case of gastric cancer.

An illustrative case is the following:—

Mr. S., aged 60. On Dec. 29th, 1919, I found him in bed with temperature 101° F. and a hard, irregular lump in the cæcum. He had lost weight and complained of recent “rheumatic pains” shooting up to the right loin. There was no vomiting, but the abdomen was tympanitic. Tongue clean and pulse 70 and bowels well open. He was put at once on the above alum mixture, with a diet of soda-and-milk, beef-tea, and bread-and-milk. On Dec. 30th calomel gr. i. was given four-hourly for relief of distension.

Jan. 1st: Irregular and hard lump still there, but less painful and certainly smaller.

Jan. 4th: Calomel is keeping the bowels open; much mucus in the motions, but no blood. Abdomen flatter. T. 100°.

Jan. 7th: T. 99.8°. Growth hardly palpable.

Jan. 9th: T. 98.6°.

Jan. 20th: Putting on weight rapidly with good appetite. Going to the seaside.

This is one out of six cases of hard irregular growth in the cæcum or colon, with shooting pains up to the right loin, treated by this method. Other cases treated with similar success have been carcinoma of the stomach (7), gall-bladder (1), and prostate gland (1). A case of carcinoma of the ovary responded in an encouraging way. I am placing these suggestions on record in order that other practitioners may test a simple but effective treatment in inoperable or incurable post-operative cases.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

REGINALD LARKIN, M.D. Lond., M.R.C.S.

London, S.E., March 18th, 1921.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRES AND DAY NURSERIES.—In view of inquiries from local authorities and others interested, the Ministry of Health have issued a revised list, with index, of maternity and child welfare centres in England and Wales, including, for the first time, a list of day nurseries. The list contains the names and addresses of 735 centres and 140 day nurseries conducted by voluntary societies and of 1188 centres and 44 day nurseries conducted by local authorities. At about 150 of the centres special dental treatment is provided, while others have special arrangements for eye and ear treatment. While the centres in the first part of the statement are primarily consultation centres for nursing mothers and children under 5, some are fully equipped for ante-natal consultations. There are now separate lists for residential and non-residential institutions. The Ministry advise that consultation centres should be reserved for healthy women and children, and that where possible treatment should be given at special treatment centres which may be established at a hospital or combined with a school clinic, and may take cases from a number of consultation centres. The list is obtainable from His Majesty’s Stationery Office, or through any bookseller, at 2s. net.