

sending about 0.120 gm. metallic iron in 100 c.c., or about  $\frac{2}{3}$  grain in one fluidounce. There is also a small amount of phosphate, about 5 per cent. glycerin, a reducing substance, which may be glucose or invert sugar. No potent alkaloidal drugs could be detected. The presence of an ammonium compound was demonstrated by the liberation of free ammonia on addition of fixed alkali to the preparation. The liquid is colored with caramel. A solution of iron glycerophosphate in 10 per cent. alcohol with about 5 per cent. glycerin and a little sugar or glucose had much the same chemical properties as Miles' Heart Treatment."

How long would the "patent medicine" business last if the exploiters of these nostrums were required to publish a full quantitative formula of the active ingredients on the label, and, further, were required to tell the truth about their products? The "Latest and Greatest Discovery for Weak and Diseased Hearts," which was "the result of vast experience and years of Scientific Investigation by one of the most able and learned physicians of the age" does not loom as imposingly after it has been subjected to the test of independent chemical and physiologic investigation. A little iron, a small amount of phosphate, about 5 per cent. of glycerin, and 11 per cent. of alcohol, the mixture colored with caramel—a great discovery indeed!

## Correspondence

### REQUEST FOR BIOGRAPHIC DATA

*To the Editor:*—In revising my "Cyclopedia of American Medical Biographies" into a wholly new cyclopedia, in cooperation with Dr. Walter L. Burrage, and in adding some hundreds of names, there remain a certain number of physicians about whom we have not been able as yet to obtain needed information. I write to THE JOURNAL to ask if any of its readers can enlighten me, and if they will not kindly at once communicate with me by letter that I may complete the following biographies:

In the first place, is Dr. S. S. Herrick, eminent chemist and sanitarian of New Orleans still living? If not, when and where did he die? Is Dr. D. B. Hoffman, who wrote the "Medical History of San Diego County, California," born in 1827, still living? The same question I am compelled to ask regarding Frederick V. Hopkins, early geologist of Louisiana. One of the most important of all my biographies is that of William Anderson, who lived for a time in New York, wrote a fine "Surgical Anatomy of the Groin" in 1822, and in 1837 suggested a hospital in connection with a university of the city of New York. He was associated with Valentine Mott and Wright Post in his activities. He probably graduated in Scotland, and probably returned there.

I want in all the foregoing cases the birth, death, anything about the early life, professional accomplishments and activities of any of the gentlemen, and any reference to any published memoranda, and shall be truly grateful to any one who will help me out immediately.

HOWARD A. KELLY, M.D.  
1418 Eutaw Place, Baltimore.

### "METABOLISM IN PERNICIOUS ANEMIA"

*To the Editor:*—I would be obliged to you if you will correct the impression that you give in your editorial with this title (June 21, 1919, p. 1846) regarding our "Studies of the Chemistry of Pernicious Anemia." We did not investigate the metabolism of substances in this disease but were careful to point out that our studies were directed rather at certain general chemical investigations than to anabolism and catabolism phases. We paid no attention to the intake of food, so far as its exact chemical composition was concerned. We only stated as part of the sixth conclusion that "there is a state of suboxidation—the neutral sulphur fraction is increased," which statement is, of course, correct. But we laid no stress on this matter in the paper, and we only mentioned it casually. Our object in this research was to study the functional capacity of the various organs. You misquote

us and destroy the value of our contribution to this subject by stating that the functions of the liver are reported as undamaged. We state (Conclusion 8) that "there is a deficiency in the hepatic detoxication function as shown by the sulphoconjugation test." We wrote our paper mainly to impress this finding for we believe that this may be the causative factor of this disease: the failure of the liver to neutralize the poisons generated in the gastro-intestinal tract, resulting in the absorption of these poisons by the blood with the resulting blood destruction.

MAX KAHN, M.D., New York.

### "PROTEOGENS"

STATE OF OHIO, STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

*To the Editor:*—I note in the issue of THE JOURNAL for July 12, a statement regarding the so-called "Proteogens" manufactured by the Wm. S. Merrell Company of Cincinnati.

My attention has been called to the fact that salesmen of this company have been exhibiting a letter purporting to show that this department has endorsed their products in the treatment of venereal diseases. The letter in question was written by a physician employed in one of the clinics conducted jointly by this department and the U. S. Public Health Service, and the stationery of the department was used without authority. The physician in question has made numerous efforts to recall the letter, but the Merrell people profess an inability to control its use.

I need not add that this department has not endorsed and will not endorse these products, and has no evidence that they are of any value whatsoever.

ALLEN W. FREEMAN, M.D., Commissioner of Health.

### "THE NEUROLOGY OF CERVICAL RIBS"

*To the Editor:*—Dr. Church, in his paper on "The Neurology of Cervical Ribs" (THE JOURNAL, July 5, 1919, p. 1), says: "No textbook on nervous diseases makes the slightest detailed mention of cervical ribs in connection with brachial plexus disorders," etc. In the second edition of Jelliffe and White, Diseases of the Nervous System, 1917, is a discussion of the subject, and (p. 366) a roentgenogram with the caption: "Double cervical rib causing mixed type of brachial palsy." In several places the relation of cervical rib to brachial plexus disorders is given in detail. Dr. Church further states that cervical ribs have never been observed in the first, second or third ribs. In the textbook just mentioned will be found in the section on cervical rib (p. 378): "Thomas Murphy has recorded a case in which the symptoms were due to the pressure of the first rib. A similar case is reported by Sherrin."

SMITH ELY JELLIFFE, M.D., New York.

## Queries and Minor Notes

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

### THE SEPTIC VIBRIO

*To the Editor:*—I am a discharged soldier about to enter the state university this fall. Across the ocean, during my stay as a patient in a hospital, I heard of a parasite known as the *Vibrio septique*, and cannot seem to get any definite information as to its character or morphology. Will you kindly give me any information you may have available?

H. G. WELLS, Waterbury, Vt.

ANSWER.—The *Vibrio septique* (*Bacillus septicus*, *B. oedematis*, bacillus of malignant edema) was discovered by Pasteur in 1876. The next year, 1877, Pasteur and Joubert (*Bull. de l'Acad. de méd.* 187:793) established the principal characters of the vibrio and called the sickness produced by it acute experimental septicemia. Koch and Gaffky (*Mitt. a. d. k. Gsndhtsamts*. 1881, p. 52 et seq.) gave it the name, bacillus