

Oleum Telesphoros—A New Use for Oleomargarine

The following letter sent to THE JOURNAL by Albert P. Mathews, Ph.D., professor of physiologic chemistry in the University of Chicago, is interesting. Dr. Mathews' letter illustrates once more the much overworked scheme on the part of manufacturers of proprietary remedies of investing very ordinary substances with most extraordinary properties—and names.

"Under the name 'Oleum Telesphoros,' an animal oil is being recommended for use in abdominal surgery for the purpose of preventing adhesions. Whether oils of animal or vegetable origin may have such an action or not I am not competent to judge, but I am much amused at the name of this 'sacred oil' and the claims made for it. From the description of its origin it is obviously nothing more or less than 'oleo oil' or oleomargarine' as it is called abroad, and the chief basis of oleomargarine made in this country. Few would recognize it under the high sounding name of Oleum Telesphoros, and few probably would be willing to pay \$2.00 a pint for it under its trade name. The statement that, being derived from the omentum and appendices epiploicae, it is hence 'no more than natural that one of its greatest spheres of usefulness should develop in its application to abdominal surgery,' will carry great weight with those who believe that kidney beans are a panacea for kidney disease and that lunacy is due to the moon."

Correspondence

Home for Widows and Orphans of Physicians

To the Editor:—About two years ago some of us instituted a movement for the founding of a home for widows and orphans of physicians. Since that time we have worked steadily but quietly for the raising of funds and now, sooner than many thought possible, we have seen the realization of our hopes and wishes by the purchase in fee of a large and handsome building at 1615 Bolton Street in this city. The house is a three-and-a-half-story brick mansion with a frontage of 20 feet and depth of lot 132 feet. It is in the choicest residence section, off the lines of street cars yet easily accessible to several of them. There is a wide alley in the rear and the surroundings are exceptionally good. There is a tiled vestibule, and a handsome staircase extends from the wide hall to the third floor. There is a fine suite of rooms on the first floor admirably adapted for receptions, entertainments, etc. There are bath-rooms on the second and third floors. As soon as the building can be put in order we expect to open it for a number of applicants who are waiting to enter. We purchased this property in fee because we thought that the best plan and we did not wish to lose such an eligible offer. But, of course, this has involved us in considerable expense and we appeal to all members of the profession to aid us by gifts, large or small. We shall exercise the closest economy, but the maintenance of an institution of this size will demand large expenditures and we must depend very largely on the liberality of our friends, especially those of the medical profession. I am glad to be able to announce that we have just received a contribution of \$100 from Dr. Hugh H. Young, president of the Medical and Surgical Faculty of Maryland, and that Drs. Jacobi, Welch and Harvey Cushing are also among our patrons.

EUGENE F. CORDELL, M.D., Treasurer.

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The Army Canteen

To the Editor:—A correspondent in THE JOURNAL, Dec. 30, 1911, p. 2155, expresses a desire that the liquor canteen be reestablished at army posts, hoping that thereby this lounging-place may be made more attractive than the more disreputable drinking-places outside.

If our soldiers cannot find agreeable amusement without booze to make it attractive it is time that a determined effort to refine their depraved taste be made by the officers, who have plenty of spare time on their hands; for surely it cannot

be possible that officers themselves can be dissipated and they therefore could, by both example and precept lent to their work, elevate the minds and morals of these debased men to enjoy wholesome sports and respectable amusements.

It is as absurd to furnish our soldiers beer to make them happy and keep them straight as to turn a lot of low women into the camp or to institute a legalized gambling hell.

The difficulty appears to be the lack of control exerted by the officers over the men, the last condition that should exist in a properly disciplined army, and the unwillingness or inability of the same officers to enforce the laws and clean up and clear out the saloons, speakeasies and brothels that infest like vermin the surroundings of an army post. If in times of peace our regular army cannot keep order within itself, or decency and law in its environment, is it worth maintaining for prospective wars? If we must allow the soldiers to drink in order to keep them sober when their services are not required, what good will they be when a cool head and steady, courageous nerve are essential.

EVAN O'NEILL KANE, M.D., Kane, Pa.

Addition to Article on Control of Typhoid

To the Editor:—Kindly note the following omission for which I am responsible in the article by Drs. Price, Rohrer and myself concerning "A Practical Method for the Control of Typhoid Fever" in THE JOURNAL, Jan. 20, 1912. On page 166, after "distilled water," in the third paragraph I should have added the following: "Enough of a 1 per cent. solution of azolitmin is then added to the medium to impart a lavender color to this solution."

WILLIAM ROYAL STOKES, Baltimore,
Chief, Bureau of Bacteriology, State of Maryland Department of Health.

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.

PHYSIOLOGIC EFFECT OF COLOR OF GARMENTS

To the Editor:—What would be the physiologic or other effect of a light-colored garment with a dark inner surface, an arrangement somewhat analogous to the arrangement of pigment in the skin? Has there not been some work done along this line in the tropics, and if so, kindly quote conclusions briefly.

H. B. FORBES, Ogden, Utah.

ANSWER.—White cloth reflects the rays of the sun and does not absorb heat, but the effects of tropical climates are largely attributed to the actinic or ultraviolet rays, and it is not certain that white surfaces prevent the passage of these rays. White cloth is generally recommended as a proper color for outer clothing in the tropics. The use of dark cloth to lessen the effect of light would seem to be rational, in view of the protective action of pigment in the skin. This view has been especially developed by Major Woodruff. He considers that white men cannot become acclimated in the tropics and that they must be protected by clothing opaque to the blue and ultraviolet rays. For this purpose, he says, the outer clothing should be white, gray or yellow, because the heat will be least absorbed by these colors, while the underclothing should be black or yellow to stop the ultraviolet rays. A trial of orange-red underclothing was made in the United States Army in the Philippines and the results indicate that garments of this color are inferior in comfort to white and show no evidence of being protective against the sun's rays (THE JOURNAL, May 28, 1910, p. 1793).

TOILET VERSUS WATER-CLOSET

To the Editor:—Is it too late to nall to the counter a spurious neologism that has been insidiously working its way for some time into the currency of the King's English? In a word, shall "water-closet," a word so acceptable to civilized man that it has been welcomed to the vocabularies of almost all modern languages, give way to "toilet" as implying the like concept? Surely, physicians who carry the principles of asepsis into the practice of speech and abhor impurities in their mother tongue may still accomplish something by making a stand against the squeamishness of female