

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

AN EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE FOR UNIVERSITY GRADUATES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It may be of interest to many of your readers to know that an appointments board has been constituted by the University of London. The terms of reference to the board are "to assist graduates and students of the University in obtaining appointments, and to coördinate and supplement the work done by the schools and institutions of the University with this object." I am directed by the board to express their hope that, through the medium of the press, the objects of the board may be brought to the notice of graduates as well as of those who are able and willing to assist in furthering the work of the board, the aim of which is to encourage the selection of university men for all posts in the work of which the possession of a university training on scientific methods is an advantage. They wish to assist graduates to find employment, and to assist employers to find, in the university ranks, suitable men for vacancies.

It would assist the board if, whenever your readers know of any vacant appointments suitable for university men, they would communicate with the secretary of the board, so that he may put forward selected candidates. In this way the work of the board as an employment exchange would be greatly helped.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

HENRY A. MIERS, Principal.

University of London, South Kensington, S.W., Sept. 6th, 1909.

LIFE ASSURANCE AND ITS RELATION TO SOME PHYSIOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF ADOLESCENCE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is a prevailing custom for bank directors to insist upon an assurance of the lives of their clerks when they enter on their duties, which usually takes place during adolescence. This assurance is therefore of vital importance to a bank clerk, inasmuch as his appointment is contingent upon his acceptance by an assurance company. It is incumbent on medical examiners, therefore, not only to ascertain the facts relating to the applicant for assurance, but also to interpret accurately their significance in order to prevent grave injury being done to these lads on the threshold of their career, as well as, while securing suitable, to protect assurance companies from unsuitable, "lives."

This question involves a large class of "lives" at a most critical time to them. I shall explain myself best by giving the requisite details of the medical examination of a lad, aged 18 years, who was directed to present himself to me for this purpose. I will be as brief as possible.

1. I discovered that he had a trace of sugar in his urine. I regret that I am unable to give the specific gravity of the urine, as I made my notes only on the report, but it was somewhere between 1025 and 1030. I therefore postponed his acceptance for some weeks for further investigation. He admitted that he was fond of sugar, and that he had eaten a considerable quantity of chocolate the day before. His urine was subsequently examined about ten times, every day consecutively for a week, and there was never a trace found on any other occasion. Now such an amount of sugar is common, or perhaps I should say "not uncommon," in lads of this age who are partial to sweets and sugar, and how few are not. Only a week or two before I found a similar trace under identical circumstances, and was able notwithstanding to effect an assurance on the "life."

2. In addition to this trace of sugar he had a hard thumping action of the heart, a mitral systolic murmur at the apex, and considerably increased arterial tension. In fact, I expected to find the albuminuria of adolescence which is so frequent in this condition of circulation, but there was none. In my report I pointed out that, in my opinion, the

trace of sugar and the state of his circulation were physiological and incidental to his age, and I advised the acceptance of his life as "a good average life." It was decided by the directors of the assurance society to add five years to his age for his assurance, to which the bank directors naturally would not accede. Unless, therefore, the lad's life can be accepted at the ordinary rate he has to forfeit his situation.

Some weeks elapsed when he was sent to me by another assurance company, and I again thoroughly examined him. It happened to be on one of those lovely hot days of the first fortnight of this month. He bicycled to see me and he was "all of a glow." His heart's action was as quiet and subdued as could be desired; there was no mitral murmur; and the increased tension of the arteries was non-existent. There could be no question now that the condition of his circulation at the former examinations (for he was sent to me twice) was entirely physiological and not pathological. I have observed it hundreds of times at this age, and have learnt not to regard it as evidence of disease. There was no trace of sugar. I recommended again that he should be accepted as "a good average life," and this was carried out. I feel sure the company transacted "good business" and the candidate secured his necessary object.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

CLEMENT DUKES, M.D. Lond., F.R.C.P. Lond.,

Consulting Physician to Rugby School, and Senior Physician to Rugby, August 23rd, 1909. Rugby Hospital.

HEAD-LIGHTS FOR CARS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Most of us who keep a little car for night work, and are content then with a pace of 10 or 12 miles per hour, used to get along with comfort and safety with the ordinary paraffin side-lights. For the last few years this has been impossible owing to two factors. The general use of dazzling acetylene lamps on bicycles and of the still more blinding lamps of the big cars is the first. The second is the tarring of the roads, which renders it impossible to recognise the middle of them without good illumination.

Of course, the first remedy was to get an acetylene head-lamp. This was perfectly satisfactory in use, but required constant attention and meant inevitable delay when called up on a cold winter's night. An electric head-lamp solves the difficulty. As sent out, these lamps are generally fitted with bulbs of 8 or 6-volt capacity. These require two ordinary 4·2-volt accumulators, or at the least, for the latter, three 2·1-volt cells. If the bulb be removed and replaced by a 4-volt one, a very satisfactory light is obtained for moderate speeds, and takes only one battery. An excellent plan is to carry a "Bourdspeed" Hellisen dry battery, and to couple up only three of the cells. This gives a light ample for the speed mentioned and for local work. For longer journeys, where one may be detained after dark, and with a larger car, both lamps may be used. Should one system break down, the other will still be enough for a moderate speed.

The advantage of the dry battery is that if the lamp should only rarely be required it can be relied upon to answer perfectly after many months, and also it is always available as a spare for driving the car. Thus only one battery need be connected up with the engine. This is written in the hope that it will be of use to medical practitioners in the coming winter.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

August 30th, 1909.

J. B. EMMERSON.

WANTED: STEAM-CAR EXPERIENCES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I wonder if any readers of THE LANCET could give me their experience with a "steam" car. One sees constant references to the various petrol cars, but scarcely ever a "steamer" mentioned. My district is a very hilly one, and I have a notion that an 8-10 h.p. steam car might give me more power than a similar powered petrol car.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Cumberland, August 31st, 1909.

HILL COUNTRY.