

designed for radiography or fluoroscopy, is essentially unfitted for the work, as it is constructed to give as large a *quantity* (milliamperage) as possible through a medium tube for a short time, while for these treatments a small milliamperage, through an excessively hard tube, is required for hours consecutively. The method of measuring the rays is also special, as these very hard rays—filtered as they are through 0.5 mm. zinc (= about 12 mm. aluminium) cannot be measured by Sabouraud pastilles, which are, according to Prof. Sidney Russ, "hopelessly transparent to very penetrating types of radiation." Dr. Charles Guilbert, in his recent work on deep therapy, agrees with the Erlangen school that the only reliable method of measuring X ray dosage is that based on ionisation (iontoquantimeter). It is only by some such means as this that it is possible to estimate accurately what percentage of the dose falling on the skin is absorbed, and is therefore of therapeutic value at varying depths in the tissues.

Deep therapy, similar in principle though at times differing in the details of the technique, is being practised at most large continental hospitals; there are five installations suitable for the treatment in constant use at the late Prof. Wertheim's clinic in Vienna. From what I saw at Erlangen I am of opinion that this treatment of malignant disease offers, in suitable cases, as good results as regards cure and the absence of the likelihood of metastasis as Prof. Wintz claims.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

J. CURTIS WEBB,

Hon. Radiologist, Gloucester Royal Infirmary.

Sept. 22nd, 1921.

THE COUGHING CUP.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I should like to endorse the suggestion of the "coughing cup" for the prevention of tuberculosis contained in the letter of Dr. T. M. Allison in THE LANCET of Sept. 17th. But I would go one further and suggest that everyone suffering from a cough should use a coughing cup. Post-mortem findings and the Pirquet reaction support the hypothesis that the tubercle bacillus is ubiquitous among civilised communities and that everyone is infected at some period of his existence and possibly a danger to the community while carrying the organism. I further suggest that the cough spray is the *chief* mode of infection and that the apparently non-tuberculous, being in the large majority, are responsible for the widespread dissemination of the bacillus to at least an equal extent as the obviously tuberculous. A few of the apparently non-tuberculous are incipient cases without physical signs or signs sufficient to bring them under the scrutiny of a medical officer, but the great majority of this class, although reacting to the Pirquet test, never develop the disease as it is known to the clinician. It has been demonstrated how the meningococcus can pass through a community under certain conditions—namely, those of overcrowding and bad ventilation, and that the process is accelerated by the presence of coughs and colds. The inference that the tubercle bacillus, which is so widespread in its distribution, is disseminated in the same manner as the meningococcus is strongly supported by facts.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

D. H. C. GIVEN, M.D., D.P.H.,

Sept. 19th, 1921.

Surgeon-Commander, R.N.

ROYAL MICROSCOPICAL SOCIETY.—A conversazione will be held at the Mortimer Halls, Mortimer-street, London, W., on Wednesday next, Oct. 5th, from 7.30 to 10.30 p.m., the President, Prof. John Eyre, receiving the guests. A preliminary programme of meetings for the coming session has been issued. The papers to be read include one by Dr. Lancelot T. Hogben, entitled Preliminary Account of the Spermatogenesis of Sphenodon; a paper by Prof. Eyre on Microscopy and Oyster Culture, and one by Mr. Joseph G. Barnard on the Future of the Microscope in Medical Research. Further information can be obtained from the hon. secretaries, Mr. J. G. Barnard and Dr. J. A. Murray, 20, Hanover-square, London, W. 1.

Obituary.

CAREY PEARCE COOMBS, M.D. LOND.

THE death of Dr. Carey Pearce Coombs, of Castle Cary, Somerset, has removed a familiar figure from the ranks of the medical profession in the West Country. Dr. Coombs was born at Frome, where he went to school. At the age of 14 he was apprenticed to his uncle, who was practising in the same town, and two or three years later went to St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington. This school was then in its infancy, and the successes gained by the young Coombs at the University of London (honours in several subjects in the First M.B., and a final pass at the age of 21) were all the more welcome. During these years he lived with and assisted Mr. Fitzpatrick in Lisson-street, near the Edgware-road. He was assistant demonstrator of anatomy at St. Mary's, and subsequently house surgeon, but any hope of promotion to the honorary staff was frustrated by the death of his father, which made it necessary for him to take a share in his uncle's practice in 1865. He went to live at Beckington, near Frome, and in 1866 married Mary Leslie, daughter of Mr. William Franklin, of Coventry. In 1867 he took a small practice, one of several then existing in the town of Castle Cary. After passing his M.D. in 1869, Coombs gradually absorbed the other practices, and was in active work till 1911, when he retired, after a seven years' partnership with Dr. David Price who succeeded him.

During this period of 44 years he endeared himself to the whole neighbourhood, not only by his professional efficiency, but also by his kindly and unselfish disposition. He held various local appointments, among them the medical officership to the Castle Cary district of the Wincanton Union, and the Ditcheat district of the Shepton Mallet Union. His principal contributions to medical literature dealt with electro-therapeutics, in which he took the greatest interest. In 1875 Sir William (then Dr.) Broadbent, in his preface to the seventh edition of Tanner's "Practice of Medicine," stated that the section on electro-therapeutics had been written by his "friend and late pupil, Dr. C. P. Coombs." Twenty years later the subject of his presidential address to the Bath and Bristol Branch of the British Medical Association was "Galvanism in the Treatment of Neuritis," an address which he expanded into a small volume, published in 1896. Although he held no public health appointment, he was largely responsible for securing for Castle Cary a safe water-supply, and was the first chairman of the water company formed in 1908.

Throughout his life the character of Dr. Coombs was marked by a singular catholicity of temper as of taste. Brought up as a Free Churchman, he attended the Congregational Chapel at Castle Cary from the time when he settled in the town until his death. For nearly 50 years he was treasurer to the Chapel, and in many other ways gave his services to the cause. In spite of this fidelity to conviction—a course difficult for a young doctor to take in a country town 50 years ago—he made numerous friends among those of other persuasions, and was wont to say that the proudest moment of his life was that in which he had been helped into his overcoat by four rural deans! For many years he was president of a non-sectarian men's adult school. He was fond of music, and for nearly 30 years was president of the local choral society which he helped to found. Among his other hobbies were painting and wood-carving. He was no mean archæologist, and in a neighbourhood affording unlimited material for such studies he was an unerring guide.

After his retirement in 1911 he was made a Justice of the Peace, and chairman to the Castle Cary school managers. He was also chairman of Messrs. John Boyd and Co., Ltd., for many years, and trustee of the Jubilee Cottages founded by that firm for their superannuated workpeople. His personal appearance