Alleviation of Prickly Heat

SIR.—I have read your annotation on prickly heat (Nov. 15, p. 779) and should like to mention a method of alleviation of this annoying complaint which is very effective and dramatic in its action, although it is not a cure, nor does it supersede any methods which are known to be effective in its prophylaxis or cure. I am referring to the beneficial effect of "benadryl." Within the space of several hours of taking 100 mg. of benadryl there is a blanching of the affected area and a concomitant relief from the intense itching. A short course of benadryl lasting 1-2 days is able to cause a complete remission of symptoms, but naturally in an adverse climate there will be a recurrence. I presume that other antihistamine drugs will act similarly. I should be very grateful to hear of anyone's experience of this method.—I am, etc.,

Netley, Hants.

LEON RADCLYFFE.

Diet and the Nation's Health

SIR.—In the debate of the Hunterian Society on Nov. 17 (*Journal*, Nov. 29, p. 882) the dietitians fought a losing battle on the issue "That our present diet is undermining the health of the nation." Mr. Dickson Wright stated that the assembly looked a well-fed one—not a very scientific remark, as his audience were in a favoured position to keep so, and I doubt very much whether he himself was living on the calorie level he suggested as adequate for others.

Sir Jack Drummond gave an account of the robust health of our present-day children. He never mentioned their mothers who nowadays are unable to suckle their own progeny for more than a week or two and then have to turn to dried milk, orange juice, and cod-liver oil or substitutes. I suppose these substitutes are better than the real article and will build better Britons than their grandparents. In addition these self-sacrificing mothers who give up their meagre rations to keep their children healthy are now called upon to do extra factory work. The dietitians are trying to flog a dying horse, dying of malnutrition without hope or energy.—I am, etc.,

Woodley, Cheshire.

J. G. BENNETT.

POINTS FROM LETTERS**What is a Psychiatrist?**

DR. J. B. GURNEY SMITH (Epsom, Surrey) writes: Having reference to the recent correspondence on the M.R.C.P. and specialists and the D.P.M., I should be very glad to know what is a psychiatrist. . . . It would seem that there are many medical men definitely engaged in psychiatric work calling themselves psychiatrists who have no real right so to style themselves. A surgeon is usually the possessor of the F.R.C.S. or M.S. and a physician the M.D. or M.R.C.P. Surely all psychiatrists should be diplomates in their particular subject? I shall be glad of any official and informative views on this subject.

Hospital Treatment of School-children in Shropshire

DR. CLAUDE E. TANGYE (Truro, Cornwall) writes: This correspondence must have roused great regret. With the advent of the National Health Service it is more than ever vital that there should be complete accord between the general body of practitioners and the medical officer of the authority. . . . I would like to suggest that such difficulties can be avoided by the appointment of a medical advisory committee. Over more than a quarter of a century in Wiltshire such a committee, appointed by the County Branch, was of the utmost value to the profession and myself. It ensured that in presenting any proposal to the authority affecting practitioners I could rely on the support of the profession, since a free and informal discussion had already taken place at the medical committee and agreement been reached. I take this opportunity of putting on record my gratitude to those who came so regularly and so cheerfully from all parts of the county to collaborate with me. . . .

Companions of St. Luke

DR. ISABEL PULTENEY (2, Bryanston Place, London, W.1) writes: Some of the readers of the *Journal* may be interested to know of the existence of the Companions of St. Luke. This is a society of women doctors and medical students, communicant members of the Church of England, which has as its aim the mutual support of the members in leading a Christian life and the spread of the Catholic faith. The numbers are at present small and inquiries are welcomed from any who feel themselves to be in sympathy and would like further information. The Constitution allows of the admission of men students and doctors, either as a separate ward or as a mixed body; we shall be glad of suggestions on this point.

Obituary

CHARLES BOLTON, C.B.E., M.D., D.Sc., F.R.S. F.R.C.P.

With the death of Charles Bolton on Dec. 6, at the age of 77, the profession loses one of its remaining links with that vigorous Edwardian period when general consulting practice and fundamental laboratory research did not appear incompatible. The start had not been easy for him. A Yorkshire lad from Whitby, he was apprenticed there at 16 to a local doctor for three years, and then to a Manchester practitioner for a further two years. Guided perhaps by the success of his elder brother, he used his time as an apprentice so well that at the age of 21 he was able to enter for the medical course at University College, London, with an exhibition of £100 a year. The scientific atmosphere he met there was at first an astonishment and soon a life-long inspiration to him.

He took the London B.Sc. in 1894 and graduated M.B., B.S. two years later. After holding resident appointments at his own hospital under Sir Rickman Godlee and Dr. Frederick Roberts, he became resident medical officer to the Evelina Hospital for Children and, thereafter, assistant medical officer at the Eastern Fever Hospital during the distinguished superintendentship of Dr. E. W. Goodall. He then returned to University College Hospital, where for three years he was resident medical officer. Two years later he was appointed to its staff as assistant physician, became physician in 1912, and consulting physician in 1935. In 1908 he gained the D.Sc. degree; he was elected F.R.C.P. in 1909, F.R.S. in 1918, and he was awarded the C.B.E. in 1920. In 1911 he married Ethel, daughter of the late Henry George, and, although he had no children, the family medical tradition begun by him and his brother, the late Joseph Shaw Bolton, professor of mental diseases in the University of Leeds, is carried on by his nephew and niece.

Bolton was peculiarly fortunate in the period of his training, for he came to University College when it housed a galaxy of talent in its medical faculty. The medical school had not then been separated from its parent body and the faculty at University College combined both clinical and preclinical subjects and housed all the laboratories. Thane and Schafer were at the height of their powers. On the clinical side were Ringer, Barlow, Rose Bradford, Victor Horsley, and Sidney Martin, and at that time Horsley and Bradford were in the full flood of active research. A little later Bayliss and Starling joined the staff. It is not surprising that in this atmosphere Bolton should have had his scientific enthusiasm aroused and should have acquired that habit of mind which he retained through his whole life—the habit of research into the mechanism of phenomena. But he did not diverge into physiology. Perhaps his early apprenticeship in general practice determined his road, for it was to pathology he turned, and in this he was largely influenced by the writings of Cohnheim. His first researches were undertaken while he was at the Eastern Fever Hospital, where he demonstrated that in typhoid fever the infecting organism could pass the placenta and infect the foetus, and that in fatal diphtheria chromatolysis occurred in the medullary nuclei.

In 1903 he was awarded a Grocers' Company research studentship for six years, and thus obtained the desired freedom for laboratory work. His earlier interest in the mechanism of bodily function now reasserted itself, and, stimulated by clinical observations on a case of constrictive pericarditis, he began a long series of investigations into the nature of dropsy. In these he was far ahead of his time, in