

The Medical Roundup

by

Walter Adams

Emeritus Consultant in Medicine
Mayo Clinic
Emeritus Professor of Medicine
Mayo Clinic
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Stokes Adams' Disease

Recently I wrote of Stokes Adams' (or Adams Stokes') disease with its very slow pulse, and its occasional spells of unconsciousness — due to a momentary failure of the heart to beat — and to keep sending the necessary amount of blood coursing through the brain.

Then I told of the little electric pace-making apparatus which surgeons are now placing under the skin of the chest of such a patient to keep his heart beating regularly. The little apparatus sends out perhaps 80 stimuli a minute — stimuli which go down through the chest wall through wires that end up in the heart muscle. They cause the heart to beat normally, and with this, a previously very sick man may go back to his old job.

People are writing me to ask how they can find, in their neighborhood, a surgeon who will do this type of work, and I think a good way might be to write the American Heart Association people at 44 East 23rd st., New York 10, N.Y.

Now I read that Dr. Louis Tobian of the University of Minnesota (in Minneapolis) has found that the giving of the drug chlorothiazide usually will put a stop to the unconscious spells of Stokes Adams' disease. A patient's physician might care to try it. Another method of handling the disease is to inject a "storage dose" of a certain drug which resembles the thyroid hormone.

Ultrasounds and Spinal Cord

A woman writes to say that she is going to a quack who is treating her spine with ultrasonic waves. She wants to know if that is a good idea. All I can say is that I have another letter here from a woman who went to a quack who gave the upper part of her spine an ultrasonic treatment. When she returned on crutches to say that her legs had become very weak, the quack said, "Another treatment will fix that." He gave the treatment, and now the woman is paralyzed — and in a wheel chair.

Ultrasounds can be very dangerous, and they can do great harm to the spinal cord. Ignorant quacks should not be using such powerful rays that can destroy nerve tissue.

One day Blind Raftery said to Hilaria, "There is a death that comes to all of us in life, as came to me when was taken from the sight of my eyes . . . and we sit a little while by ourselves in an apart dark place, and we learn truths of how certain things one believes to be good are out vulgar selfish things, and now certain things the small think evil are but futile accidents. And we learn to be kind; such wisdom comes when we are 'dead.' And those who have never died in life, Hilaria, are pleasant shallow people, soulless as seals."

Brown Spots on Skin

Often an elderly woman writes begging me for help with getting rid of the brown spots that have appeared on the skin of her face. I have asked my good friends the skin specialists, and some say that what they try is the application on several days of a few minutes — of a little poultice made of dry ice. This causes the skin to peel, and sometimes, with the peeling, there comes away some of the pigment. Sometimes it does not come away. I know of no medicine to take by mouth that will change the situation. Many women go to a drug store asking for the dry ice poultice but the druggist has none. This treatment must be given by a skin specialist.

Ever notice little floating spots before your eyes? They are nothing to worry about — but other symptoms of eye trouble are. You can learn much about them by reading Dr. Alvarez' 25-cent booklet, "How To Safeguard Your Vision." Obtain it by sending 25 cents and a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, The Register and Tribune Syndicate, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

EPISCOPALIANS MEET

Corvallis, Ore. — Oregon Episcopalians opened their 74th annual convention here Sunday night.

The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Denny. (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

Jules H. — It's like a bombshell to learn they can't afford to send me to college.

Mr. H. H. — I thought things would get better. I didn't want to burden him.

Jules H. — I'm 16 years old and, like all my friends, counting on finishing high school and leaving home to attend a good out-of-town college.

To my horror the other evening, when I matter-of-factly remarked to my dad that I can't pick a favorite among Amherst, Princeton and Dartmouth, he told me to forget them all. He said we're living beyond our means now, and if I go to college at all, it may have to be at night and near home.

I had no inkling that things were tight. We have two cars, a boat, a summer place. My mother has maids. But they can't afford college for me. Why didn't they tell me the truth long ago?

Mr. H. H. — As Jules' father I didn't want to worry him over the precarious state of my finances. Most of my money was in the stock market and some of my holdings had been bought on margin. During the recent upsets I got caught badly. Because I still have good credit, I've been able to keep things looking right on the surface for Jules. And, with new iron in the fire, I may be able to recoup in a few years. But not in time to fork out \$4,000 a year for a fancy college for him.

I'm sorry the true picture came out so bluntly. I was glad that Jules was able to keep up with his friends. I didn't want to make him feel different. I planned to break things to him gradually.

The Council — While Mr. H.'s intention was good, it's another one of the kind that paves the road to you-know-what for a young man. The

intention was to spare Jules the truth, because the truth was painful. But truth has a way of creeping in from a side-spur, and the pain is doubled because of shock and lack of preparation.

Nowadays parents are advised to level with a child when it comes to life's problems, rather than shield him completely. Of course, this doesn't mean to knock the pinnings out of his sense of safety and protection. Cushioning the facts about his financial reverses with assurances to Jules that together the family would work things through, Mr. H. could have given his son a wholesome and valuable encounter with reality. Now it's a head-on collision.

Jules has been permitted to dally in a dream world. Without the solid resources of the Joneses, his dad wanted him to keep up with Jones Jr., to "belong" where he really didn't belong. He has lived in the wrong neighborhood, aspired to false goals.

The job at hand now is a cards-on-the-table family talk. What "showy" items must be renounced? What basic holdings must be saved? What future treasures must be striven for? From such a clear-eyed assessment, plans for Jules' college education can emerge.

If, as seems likely, there's no parental handout available, Jules has many resources. Besides jobs on campus, there are scholarships and loans to see him through. He can send for the 1952 edition of "Undergraduate College Scholarships" from the U. S. Office of Education, Fourth and Independence sts., Wash., D. C.

For Mr. H. there's comfort in a line from Helen S. Arstein's book, "What To Tell Your Child." "In the long run," she says, "a crisis met honestly . . . can become a strengthening force in the life of the family."

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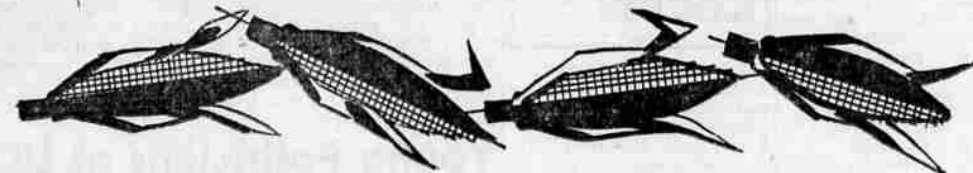
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