

ghastly plaster-of-Paris whiteness, and that great numbers of consumers are so ignorant that they do not know good bread when they see it. I am sure that every dietitian will agree with me that bread out of which all the nutritive properties have been milled is an exceedingly poor food. It is especially undesirable for children, since I take it to be destitute of the constituents which the growing human organism requires. At the present time English white bread is utterly lacking both in flavour and nutriment. Most of our brown bread, on the other hand, is excellent—because, of course, it retains the essential qualities of bread.

B. A. C.

Certificated Blind Masseurs.

SIR,—I am much interested in the work of the Association of Certificated Blind Masseurs, of which I have the pleasure to be President, and I should be very grateful if you could find space in your valuable journal to publish this letter.

The Association has recently published leaflets showing the locations of its members in London and all parts of the British Isles. May I venture to suggest that all registered medical practitioners would do well to obtain copies from the Secretary of the Association, 224-6-8 Great Portland Street, London, W.1.? These leaflets show that members of the Association, both masseurs and masseuses, are established in practically all the large towns, as well as in all parts of London and the suburbs. As massage is work which it is generally recognised can be most efficiently carried out by properly trained blind people, those doctors who can see their way to the employment of the members of the Association of Certificated Blind Masseurs will be aiding in a work of national importance.

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PRESENTATIONS TO HOSPITAL ORGANISERS.

THERE have recently been three presentations to hospital secretaries and organisers, all of whom have done valuable work for the institutions with which they are connected. Mr. Walter Wormald has been presented with a tea service in recognition of his twenty-five years work as secretary of the Leeds Workpeople's Hospital Fund. Mr. H. M. Howard, the honorary secretary of the West Norfolk and Lynn Hospital, has been presented with a silver inkstand and a pair of silver salt cellars in recognition of his good work during the past twelve years. Mr. Howard has taken great interest in the village contribution scheme of the district and in the Hospital Sunday Fund movement. A gold watch has been presented to Mr. William R. Wilson by the Workmen's Committee of Durham County Hospital and the subscribers on his completion of twenty-one years work in the post of secretary. The length of service given by hospital men is often remarkable, and the changes that have taken place during Mr. Wilson's administration concern not merely the equipment and management of voluntary hospitals, nor the wonderful growth of working-men's support, but the improved status of the hospital profession.

THE ROMANCE OF COD-LIVER OIL.

COD-LIVER oil is a nasty-looking fluid with an unpleasant smell and a vile taste. But lurking in its greasy yellow depths there is the very soul of romance, an unwritten record of murder and sudden death, and of an unbroken sequence of "life." Cod-liver oil has long been known as a valuable preventive of diseases such as rickets, but it is only of late years that these therapeutic properties have been traced to its remarkably high vitamine content. Weight for weight, cod-liver oil contains from 200 to 300 times as much vitamine as fresh butter. Vitamines can, apparently, not be created by the animal kingdom; generated in the vegetable kingdom, they can be passed through the animal kingdom by the simple process of one animal eating another. In a lecture recently given by Professor Poulsson to the Medical Society of Christiania, an interesting account was given of the history of the vitamins in cod-liver oil. They are generated in the tiny, unicellular algæ which grow in such profusion that the sea for many square miles assumes a muddy appearance. This vegetable plankton is consumed by plankton of the animal kingdom, and this animal plankton is in its turn consumed by small fish. Little fish have bigger fish upon their tracks to eat them, and cannibalism among fish proceeds until the small, arctic, salmon-like fish—*mollotus arcticus*—is reached.

THE ELUSIVE VITAMINE.

Full of much good vitamine, swarms of this fish seek refuge in the early winter months in the coastal waters west and north-west of Norway, pursued by millions of cod. During these months the *mollotus arcticus* is the chief source of food for the rapacious cod, whose vitamine requirements are, indeed, great. An average-sized cod lays from five to nine million eggs, each of which must have its share of vitamine. The cod having been caught, and oil having been extracted from its liver, it might have been thought that the vitamine had reached the last stage in its long and exciting journey. But, as Professor Poulsson has shown, the step from the cod to man need not necessarily be its last. He has found that if a breast-fed infant is developing unsatisfactorily, giving cod-liver oil to the mother may have a dramatically beneficial effect on the infant, which at once proceeds to grow and flourish. The Norwegian Government, realising what an important national asset cod-liver oil is, has instituted and financed a scheme of research with a view to adding to our knowledge of it, and it has already been proved at the Pharmacological Institute in Christiania that while well-bottled cod liver oil retains a high vitamine content even when three years old, it loses its vitamine if it is exposed to the air for a fortnight. Evidently vitamins are sensitive, elusive, not to say capricious things, and before we can harness them like electricity to our coach, we must learn much more about them than we know at present.

"The Lancet" concludes the hundredth year of its existence in October, and it is proposed to hold a dinner in celebration of the event. Dr. J. H. W. Laing and Mr. H. D. Gillies, 7 Portland Place, W.1, are honorary secretaries.