Correspondence

trial and if found successful, which it surely will, you will kindly recom-
mend its use cause it to be Circulated in all the Hospitals, Public as well
as Private, so as to be an efficient and available means of saving suffering
humanity.

I beg to remain
Sir
Your most obedient
FAKIR

WANTED, AN EXPLANATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS."

Sir,—I am much obliged to Lieutenant-Colonel Manders, but his expla-
nation, if I may so designate it, really amounts to an entomological sketch,
in the main, begging the whole question. I asked for an explanation of
a mosquito-free "oasis" in a malarial-infested area, and he replies by
quoting Wallace's "Darwinism" re the limitation of habitat commonly
observed in many insects, "for no apparent cause," illustrating the fact
by examples. Presumably there is a cause for the absence of the swallow-
tailed butterfly from all parts of England other than Cambridgeshire, just
as there is for the absence of mosquitoes from Sarant Wadi; for Nature
is never capricious (scientifically speaking) but rigidly law-abiding. The
facts are not in dispute, but the cause. One officer kindly wrote to me
from Crete suggesting "lemna," but it is not so in Sarant Wadi, and, at
the best, it could only be a partial explanation.

It was, perhaps, ambiguity on my part that led Lieutenant-Colonel
Manders to imagine that I asserted that fish would not destroy mosquito
larvæ. Of course they will, in a given lake or pool (perhaps entirely),
but they can't, and never will do so, in an area of five or ten miles
square, including within it a large native town, numerous villages, and
not one but thousands of breeding places, to which no fish could
gain access, and in which, as a matter of fact, no fish existed. The
"mosquito-brigade" at Colaba the other day, for example, found larvæ
in a small collection of water in the fork of a tree. I do not suppose
that Lieutenant-Colonel Manders will maintain that, however ubiquitous
the Indian minnow may be, it is arboreal. I repeat that there are no
mosquitoes at Sarant Wadi anywhere, or at any time, and no larvæ to be
found in lake, pond, pool, puddle, rice-field, water-chatty, or any permanent
or casual collection of water whatsoever. At least I failed to find them, and, all the year round, no one uses mosquito curtains. I am afraid, therefore, that Lieutenant-Colonel Manders' suggestion must be regarded, in more senses than one, as "fishy."

By the way, I made inquiry about the birds, thinking it possible that they might have something to do with the matter, and elicited the fact that the common sparrow was also conspicuous by its absence. Is there any connection?

Yours faithfully,

R. H. Forman,
Colonel, R.A.M.C.

September 21st, 1907.

NOTES ON THE HEALTH OF EUROPEANS AND NATIVES IN PEKING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS."

Sir,—In the very interesting "Notes on the health of Europeans and Natives in Peking," by my predecessor, Captain (now Major) F. E. Gunter, in the Journal for February, 1906, page 153, the absence of cases of enteric fever among the French, Russian and Japanese Legation Guards for the year 1903 is specially to be noted. In this connection the following translation of a letter—written in answer to enquiries by me—which I received in January, 1906, from the Senior French Medical Officer, who has been in Peking for many years, may be of interest.

I am, &c.,

K. Bruce Barnett,
Major, R.A.M.C.

August 1st, 1907.

TRANSLATION.

Dear Dr. Barnett,—This year there have fortunately been no cases of typhoid fever, either in the French Legation or in the Legation Guard, nor yet in previous years since November 1st, 1901, the date on which the Guard was formed. I am of opinion that this result is due (1) to the fact that only distilled water is used for drinking purposes, the well water of the barracks luckily being full of magnesia, and the soldiers having no inclination to taste it. (2) To the sleeping accommodation of the soldiers, all of whom sleep on the first floor of the barracks. (3) To good feeding. (4) To freedom from crowding in the barracks, the men's rooms being plentifully aired during the day and only occupied at night. (5) To the removal from the barracks every morning of all slops and excrement. (6) To the cleansing of the men's clothes, &c., in a special wash-house by washerwomen who use boiling water and soda. (7) To attention to personal cleanliness, which is scrupulously observed and is compulsory. (8) To the care of the mouth, supervised by a medical inspection, an antiseptic powder for the teeth being distributed to the men.