

Controversy over Erythema Nodosum Leprosum

A few years ago the former Editor of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY, Dr. H. W. Wade, wrote to the current Editor that he had long thought of using the Correspondence Section of THE JOURNAL for a series of letters, constituting a symposium in effect, on some important and controversial subject in leprosy. It was his thought

that an informal "symposium" published in this way might clear up some misconceptions, resolve a few doubts, and furnish a precedent for other symposia by correspondence.

He was never able to bring about the compilation he had in mind. By accident, however, something of the kind has be-

come possible in this issue of *THE JOURNAL*. Erythema nodosum leprosum is a subject of the type that Dr. Wade had in mind. It takes some courage to advance new concepts in this field, for they are almost certain to run counter to well substantiated concepts in the minds of others. The subject of ENL, to use its familiar abbreviation, is compounded with uncertainty over its etiology in terms of sensitization and precipitating factors, the relation of chemotherapy and various stress factors to its genesis, and the treatment of the disturbing condition itself. A number of papers on ENL and its origins and treatment were published in the January-March 1967 issue of *THE JOURNAL*. These brought forth a series of letters,

some in comment and others in protest, which the Editor is glad to publish herewith.

The Editor has had some reason to believe that the Correspondence Section of *THE JOURNAL*, being relatively short and personalized with familiar names, is often read at once when detailed articles, with lengthy tables and analysis, are not read until a special need arises, or are postponed to that elusive period "when there is more time." The letters here published show, however, that this may not be the rule. The ENL articles in the January-March issue of *THE JOURNAL* aroused interest at once.

—E. R. LONG