Correspondence

Dr. C. A. L. Reed and the Etiology of Epilepsy

To the Editor:—I cannot but feel that the letter of Dr. Charles A. L. Reed (The Bacteriologic Phase of Chronic Convulsive Toxemia [Epilepsy] of Intestinal Origin, *THE JOURNAL*, Feb. 24, 1917, p. 652) deserved a more important place than it received. Although over a month has passed since its publication, it seems to have attracted the attention of comparatively few readers. This article, to my mind, is the most important that Dr. Reed has published, notwithstanding the fact that he has, as yet, failed to appreciate that heredity and gross brain lesions do occasionally play some part in the production of epilepsy.

He apparently has come to the point at which he appreciates that negative findings have a certain definite value, which view no one would have accused him of possessing when he closed his article published in *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 14, 1916, by stating, "as such I, like other clinicians, must be guided by the technical findings of pathologists and bacteriologists, but they must be findings of something, not of nothing." To this statement I would say that there is no field of research work in which finding "things" is easier than it is in bacteriology. Surroundings and technic play quite as important a part in bacteriology as heredity and gross brain lesions do in epilepsy.

I fail to see where Dr. Reed has added one thing of importance to the literature on epilepsy. All that he has written has been generally accepted for years, and the surgical aspect of the treatment of the toxic cases was reviewed by Dr. Ernest LaPlace, professor of surgery at the Medico-Chirurgical College, Philadelphia, years ago. What he has done by his premature publications has been to fill the general practitioner, who depends on the research laboratories as a source of information, with doubt and misgiving.

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Pennsylvania and Entrance Conditions

To the Editor:—I am enclosing a resolution which I would ask that you publish in *THE JOURNAL*.

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WHEREAS, In 1914 certain "conditions" in the preliminary sciences were permitted by the Association of American Colleges, to terminate September, 1917, and

WHEREAS, Said Association of American Colleges during its meeting in Chicago, February, 1917, extended these "conditions" for a further period of time, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Bureau of Medical Education and Licensure of the State of Pennsylvania hereby registers its protest against such action and announces that approval will be refused any candidate applying to enter Pennsylvania either through examination or through reciprocity with any condition of any kind after September, 1917. And it is further

Resolved, By the said bureau, that it will remove from the approved list of the State of Pennsylvania the name of any medical college allowing any conditions on the preliminary requirements after September, 1917.

[NOTE.—The foregoing communication was referred to the secretary of the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association, who says:

These preambles and resolutions need a word in correction. The rules in regard to conditions were prepared in 1915 by a joint committee representing the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges, after an extensive correspondence with leading medical educators. Those conditions were to be allowed, meanwhile, until Jan. 1, 1917, after which time they were to be either discontinued or continued, as might be determined at the next annual meetings of the two associations. By a further understanding the rules with certain modifications were extended to Jan. 1, 1918. Under the present arrangement the student is permitted to enter the

medical school conditioned in four semester hours of *either* physics or biology but not in both. No condition is to be allowed in chemistry, and high school physics is no longer to be accepted in lieu of college physics. The committee representing the two organizations believe that the rapid but very desirable advances which are being made in preliminary education will work undue hardship on a large proportion of students unless such conditions were allowed. After a few years have been allowed for readjustments under the higher standards, it may then be found reasonable to insist that students enter the medical course without conditions. In the meantime, it is believed that to allow certain deserving students to carry a four semester hour condition will not handicap such students in their medical course.]

An Unmulish Trick!

To the Editor:—I wish to report an extremely rare and interesting observation: March 4, 1917, at the farm of Mr. T. B. Neely, Peoria, Ariz., I saw an iron gray mare mule, 4 years old, 15½ hands high, and weighing 1,100 pounds, suckling a male colt to which she had given birth two months previously. The owner, Mr. Neely, informed me that the mother was raised by him, and he knows her to be a true hybrid. She has this appearance to me, and in no way resembles a jennet. He further stated that, at the time conception evidently occurred, this mare mule was confined in a pasture with a large sorrel stallion, and the act of copulation between the two animals was repeatedly observed. As pregnancy, naturally, was unsuspected, the mare mule was worked at her usual task on the plow until immediately before the birth of the colt. The colt is of good size, vigorous and healthy, and eagerly suckles. Its feet, ears and head have the appearance of those of a mule, the ears and head, however, being unusually long. The shape of the body more nearly resembles that of a horse. Its color is sorrel or light bay. These facts can be authenticated by the owner.

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The Clarification of Milk

To the Editor:—In *THE JOURNAL*, March 24, 1917, Prof. E. G. Hastings of the University of Wisconsin presents his views concerning the clarification of milk. They are distinctly hostile to this process, and leave the impression that the use of a clarifier not only encourages sloppy methods at the point of production, but that health officers favoring the process are deceiving the public. Cincinnati and five other cities are cited as examples of the lengths to which misguided enthusiasts will go in an endeavor to supply a community with milk that is not only safe but decent in appearance.

Cincinnati health officials have never suggested that clarification is a substitute for cleanliness at the point of production. They do believe that it is a very efficient adjunct to cleanliness. The material removed will do more to open the eyes of a careless dairyman to his shortcomings than many hours of eloquent appeal. Seeing is believing. The Cincinnati Department of Health has not passed a regulation requiring clarification.

Professor Hastings admits that, "under ordinary conditions, more or less dirt of an insoluble nature gets into the milk," and that strainers are used for the purpose of eliminating a portion of it at the point of production. He failed to include the soluble material that constantly gets into milk. Microscopic and macroscopic examination of milk sediment reveals the presence of an occasional blood clot, hairs, cow manure, pus cells, bacteria and other flotsam and jetsam of the dairy industry. These inclusions occur in the product of the best regulated dairies, in spite of the greatest precautions taken to exclude them.

The question naturally arises, If it is a good thing to eliminate a portion of the foreign material by straining at the point of production (a process which he does not condemn),