

## Correspondence

### Endocrinopathic Inheritance

*To the Editor:*—In the letter of Dr. Irving F. Stein (THE JOURNAL, June 3, 1916, p. 1811), in which he gives a heredity chart of a family through three generations, one original parent of which had diabetes, an apparent exception to transmission of endocrinopathic characteristics is presented. In analyzing this chart, we first note that only an absence of a normal metabolic factor (diabetes) is presented—and no absence of a normal growth factor, in the parents. In the analysis of my paper (THE JOURNAL, May 6, 1916, p. 1438), I drew a conclusion that metabolic disturbances were seemingly recessive in the male and dominant in the female. On this basis, only the families of the daughters of the individual No. 3 of Dr. Stein's chart could be considered in the endocrinopathic inheritance. The number of such offspring is shown by the chart to be seven. Of these seven individuals, four are males and therefore apparently immune. Of the three females (who are probably still quite young) one already has an endocrine disturbance—obesity. That is, 33⅓ per cent.! Furthermore, while growth abnormalities are easily distinguishable, yet metabolic disturbances (diabetes, hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia, calcium and phosphorus disturbances, etc.) can frequently only be determined by careful laboratory analyses. Unless this has been done by Dr. Stein, it would be unfair to reject any individuals merely on normal appearances. I do not know what criteria Dr. Stein uses to distinguish metabolic disturbances, but I would be much interested to know whether vagotonia, muscular fatigability, tachycardia, bradycardia, pigmented skin, abnormalities of hairy growth, and similar conditions were among them. I should also like much to know just what Dr. Stein means by "simple goiter."

WALTER TIMME, M.D., New York.

### Treatment of the Neuropathic Child

*To the Editor:*—In THE JOURNAL, June 3, 1916, p. 1816, in the discussion of papers read before the Medical Society of the State of New York at Saratoga Springs, I am quoted as saying:

When the mother brings such a child to me complaining of night terrors, bed wetting and nervous symptoms, I usually prescribe bromids and Fowler's solution and let it go at that.

The reporter either misunderstood me, or else did not listen to what I had to say. If you will read the rest of the discussion as published you will see that it is inconsistent with the statement quoted above. In fact, it was the crux of my discussion that physicians are apt to minimize the importance of studying the nervous child from every point of view possible, including organic disease, heredity, environment and economics. I uttered a warning that when a child, as described above, is brought to a physician, he should not be satisfied with a diagnosis of "nervousness" and send it away with a prescription for bromids or Fowler's solution, and feel that he has discharged his duty to his patient and to society at large, because many of these children later in life fill the asylum, homes for epileptics and reformatories.

MOSES KESCHNER, M.D., New York.

### Infant Mortality Rate of Passaic, N. J.

*To the Editor:*—In the Current Comment on "The Baby's Chance for Life" (THE JOURNAL, May 27, 1916, p. 1707) concerning the infant mortality rate in 144 cities based on figures supplied by the New York Milk Committee, it was stated that Passaic, with a rate of 193.5, had the highest rate of all the reporting cities. This statement started an uproar here, and good will no doubt be the result.

As a matter of fact Passaic does not deserve this bad eminence. Investigation shows that a very material error was made in compiling the vital statistics for the New York Milk Committee in this city, and that the true infant mor-

tal rate for Passaic in 1915 was not 193.5 but 136.1. Under separate cover are sent copies of the *Daily News* giving all the evidence in the case.

As the mistake was made here, we shall have no cause for complaint if THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION will now aid us in correcting the false report which by now has been read in every part of the United States.

The state department of health, at Trenton, records our infant mortality rate for 1915 as 136.1, and a checking up of the figures here shows this to be correct. Our vital statistics are kept separate from the board of health, and it was in answering the New York Milk Committee's questions that the error was made.

We realize that Passaic is not perfect, but we do feel that we should be saved from the consequences of this blunder.

G. M. HARTT, Passaic, N. J.

Editor, Passaic *Daily News*.

## Queries and Minor Notes

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS and queries on postal cards will not be noticed. Every letter must contain the writer's name and address, but these will be omitted, on request.

### IS AROMATIC SPIRITS OF AMMONIA A DESIRABLE PREPARATION?

*To the Editor:*—The dosage of aromatic spirits of ammonia is given as 30 minims often repeated; that apparently means about 20 drops of alcohol, with a little over 1 grain of ammonium carbonate, and a little less than 3 drops of aqua ammoniac.

Where the effect of ammonia or its carbonate is wanted, would it not seem better to prescribe aqueous solutions, those who still find alcohol useful in medicine prescribing it as whisky or otherwise? In other words, does this preparation still deserve a place in the pharmacopeia?

W. R. T., M.D.

ANSWER.—Aromatic spirits of ammonia is an old-fashioned complex mixture; its reputation has little scientific basis. Whatever effect it may have is probably psychic, to a considerable degree, at least. Such effect might be expected from the irritation of the nasal mucosa by the ammonia and the flavor and odor of the lemon, lavender and nutmeg oils. The physical effect, if any, is probably due to the alcohol, though the ammonium carbonate and combined ammonia may have some restorative action by their irritation of the gastric mucosa or by their neutralization of nauseating acids in the stomach.

Our correspondent's point is well taken. When ammonium carbonate is to be given, it is better to give it in aqueous solution. When alcohol effects are desired, whisky is a better medium for administration.

### INTRAVENOUS PRODUCTS COMPANY—TREATMENT OF SHOCK

*To the Editor:*—1. Please give me the status of the Intravenous Products Company of Denver. They are claiming great results. Is their treatment safe, sane and trustworthy?

2. Can a better treatment of "shock" be given than those of our textbooks?

PRACTITIONER.

ANSWER.—1. THE JOURNAL, March 25, 1916, p. 978, discussed several of the preparations made by the Intravenous Products Company.

2. Up-to-date textbooks, by reliable authors, are presumed to give the best treatment. For treatment of shock, see Therapeutics, THE JOURNAL, May 6, 1916, p. 1464.

### PROPORTION OF PHYSICIANS TO POPULATION

*To the Editor:*—Please let me know in what number of THE JOURNAL there appeared an article regarding the proportion of physicians to population.

A. W. VALENTINE, M.D., Washington, D. C.

ANSWER.—In Queries and Minor Notes, THE JOURNAL, Feb. 1, 1913, p. 388, statistics are given as taken from the census of 1910 and the third edition of the American Medical Directory. In THE JOURNAL, May 27, 1916, p. 1736, statistics appear as taken from the fifth edition of the American Medical Directory, and the 1915 estimate of the U. S. Census Bureau.