

July 25, 1940

Mr. E. W. Bacon
J. B. Lippincot Company Publishers
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Bacon:

I have your letter of July 18th with your question concerning a monograph on the problems of lead poisoning.

As a matter of fact I have been accumulating material over a period of years and have some of it formulated into a general scheme for a monograph. I have been so busy with other things that I have been pushing this matter behind me for some months, but I do expect to get at the book and to complete it within a reasonable period of time. I have no commitments up to the present as to a publisher.

The general character of the book which I hope to complete will be such that it will be useful to practicing physicians, industrial physicians, industrial hygienists and persons concerned with medico-legal problems arising out of industrial uses of lead. We have been studying the problem of lead absorption, lead excretion and lead poisoning in a systematic fashion over a period of years, and we have comprehensive information on the intake and output of lead in the normal population and on the general character of normal lead metabolism as a physiologic process. With this information as a background for lead exposure and abnormal lead absorption and excretion, we have studied lead excretion and the lead content of the blood and certain other tissues in relation to various types and magnitudes of occupational lead exposure. Data are available on the range of concentrations of lead in the excreta, and to a lesser degree on the tissues in relation to different magnitudes of exposure. It is possible to define the degree of hazard in terms of excretory data. Finally we have studied a rather large number of cases of lead poisoning from a variety of sources and in a comprehensive way. On the basis of these studies, I hope to be able to delineate the clinical picture of lead poisoning with a clarity which has not been possible hitherto, and to correlate clinical pictures with quantitative data on

lead excreta in such a way as to establish certain medico-legal backgrounds which are now in a rather hazy state.

On the question of therapy alone, we are somewhat weak, but only, I believe, because there is no specific therapy for lead poisoning and because the general therapeutic approach to the problem is in a scientific sense rather weak. The fact of the matter here is that most cases of lead poisoning recover spontaneously while in the serious cases with sequelae our treatment is mostly unsuccessful.

This should give you a good idea of the general character of the book which I hope to produce, and if you are interested in it or have any suggestions to offer, in relation to increased audience, I shall be glad to hear from you.

Very truly yours,

RAK:ls

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.