

April 25, 1935

Mr. Georges Thenault
Room 527
25 Avenue Victor-Emmanuel III
Paris
France

Dear Mr. Thenault:

I have not heard from you for some time and I take it that no news from you is probably good news in that it indicates that you are not having any very serious difficulties which concern me. The chief purpose of this letter is to call your attention to an article which was recently published "On Intoxication by Tetraethyl Lead" by M. Duvoir and P. Coste, the latter as you probably know being our associate and colleague. This article of which I have a reprint appeared in *Semaine d. Hop. d. Paris* 10: 423, 1934.

It is not up to me to criticize Coste in any way in relation to this article, but I should like to point out to you for your own information that if Dr. Coste expects this article to serve a useful purpose² quieting any anxiety which may exist in France, he is probably making a rather serious mistake. There is a paragraph in the article which translated into English reads as follows: "Diagnosis. Positive diagnosis of intoxication by tetraethyl lead depends upon determining in an individual handling this product or a tetraethylized gasoline, the presence of the fundamental syndrome; falling of the arterial tension, lowering of the temperature, slowing of the pulse, and finally insomnia with agitation." In the absence of any cases of poisoning in association with gasoline containing lead, and in the absence of any reasonable suspicion that lead poisoning of the acute type could arise from such exposure, it is unfortunate that this paragraph was written to include exposure to gasoline containing lead.

At other points in the article mention is made of the precautions which are necessary to avoid danger in the handling of the gasoline. These remarks mainly of a harmless nature are not calculated to convince any physician that lead absorption does not occur as a consequence of careless exposure. I do not know to what extent Dr. Coste had any responsibility in the phraseology of the article.

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However, I should be interested in knowing, and if the opportunity presents itself to you tactfully to discuss the point, you might let me know just what Coste's reaction to the matter is. In general the article is not unreasonable or unfair, and in general it represents a proper statement of the known facts. However, it is my opinion that it does not serve any useful purpose at the present time, and if Coste is responsible for the medical interpretation of the thing, it is not done as well as one might have reason to expect in that he has not made use of the full information which is available to him.

You will understand, I trust, that I do not either wish or expect you to transmit any criticism of mine to Coste. However, it would be somewhat difficult for me to convey my query to him in proper French, and I fear the consequences of his mis-understanding my point of view if I were to write in English.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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