CHOLINESTERASE

IN SCIENCE for August 27, 1943 (98: 2539, 201) occurs an interesting article by Mendel and Rudney, concerning cholinesterase. The authors refer to the existence of two esterases capable of hydrolyzing acetylcholine, but cite as first publication of this fact their article in the *Biochemical Journal* (37: 59, 1943). The existence of these two esterases was thoroughly demonstrated and reported by G. A. Alles and R. C. Hawes in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* (133: 2, 375, April, 1940), also by R. C. Hawes and G. A. Alles in the *Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine* (26: 5, 845, February, 1941).

Mendel and Rudney refer to one of these esterases as "pseudo-cholinesterase." This seems an unfortunate designation, since most of the published references to cholinesterase probably refer to the one receiving the prefix "pseudo." It would be helpful to biologists if the authors would select some other nomenclature for discriminating between the two.

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A FEW WORDS ON RUSSIAN NAMES

I HAVE followed with great interest the discussion of transliterating Russian names by Drs. Hrdlička (SCIENCE, 97: 243), Dunlop (*ibid.*, 97: 400) and Chester (*ibid.*, 98: 302).

My long experience in library and bibliographical work has led me to the conclusion that the basic trouble in transliteration of Russian names is the lack of uniformity in such work. This could easily be avoided if the rules of the Library of Congress were strictly followed. In fact, they are often ignored even in library practise.

In one library I found the papers of the well-known Russian botanist "Кузнецов" (Kuznetsov) scattered in five places in the catalogue, but at least they all were under the letter "K." Much worse was the case of another botanist "Железнов" (Zheleznov), whose works were under "G," "J" and "Z." But I never saw a more extravagant use (or misuse) of the English alphabet than in the transliteration of the name of "Щеглеев" (Shchegleev) in which the first Russian letter was represented by the craziest combination of 7 English letters. After that experience I can only smile when K. Starr Chester says that "shch" is a rather clumsy equivalent for that letter.

The above cited examples show to what extent some transliterators may go if they do not adhere to a certain definite standard.

The rules of the Library of Congress are certainly not perfect, and I concur with K. S. Chester that "ya" is better than "i͡a" for "я" and "yu" is preferable to "i͡u" for "ю." On the other hand I disagree with him that "ch" is equivalent for "ц"; it is probably a misprint for "ч." I could recommend some minor improvements, as using "ë" for Russian "e" in order to distinguish it from "э." The Library of Congress uses "e" for both letters.

But, in all, the rules of the Library of Congress are quite satisfactory, even in the present form, and the strict use of them will bring uniformity in the transliteration of Russian words and benefit greatly all persons engaged in research work on Russian literature.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

HUMAN GASTRIC FUNCTION

Human Gastric Function: An Experimental Study of a Man and His Stomach. By STEWART WOLF, M.D., and HAROLD G. WOLFF, M.D., with a foreword by WALTER B. CANNON, M.D. 195 pages, including appendix, bibliography, index and 42 illustrations, one in color. New York: Oxford University Press.

As Dr. Cannon points out in the foreword there have been in the United States two previous famous studies of the human stomach made in individuals with gastric fistulae: Dr. William Beaumont's classic report of his experiments and observations on Alexis St. Martin and Dr. Anton J. Carlson's extensive work with Fred V. Beaumont concerned himself primarily with the digestive function of the gastric juice, Carlson with gastric motility, particularly "hunger contractions." The present monograph is a complete report of studies made in a patient, Tom, with a gastric fistula similar to that of St. Martin and Fred V. Some of the work has been published previously elsewhere. It is not entirely new, but it is meticulously thorough. It differs from the earlier studies primarily in its broader orientation, being a study of both the "man and his stomach." As the authors note in their introduction an investigator's horizon is usually limited by the vantage point on which he stands, the vantage points being the prevailing concepts of his day, and few men have been able to look beyond the horizon of their generation. Wolf and Wolff have been quick to sense the implications for gastric physiology of the old mind-body problem now returning to style as psychosomatic medicine and to subject