figure and can be reduced only with disastrous effects upon the total service.—I am, etc.,

R. V. BOYD
Department of Geriatrics,
Greenwich District Hospital,
London S.E.10

Loud Knocking on the Back Door
Sr.,—The advertisement in the B.M.J. (6 October, p. 94) for a medical school place
raises a few doubts. Moreover, Mr. John Squire (20 October, p. 172), is indeed a
matter for concern. It reveals the frustration caused by medical schools imposing an
arbitrary "A" level barrier to the selection of a student's ability. In fact the general
educational level necessary to pursue the medical curriculum successfully is not
exceptionally high. Therefore to set a standard of academic achievement in excess of what
is necessary before other qualities are given consideration is, to say the least, illogical.
If one were to list the necessary ingredients of a good doctor it might read as follows:
(1) above the average degree of physical and mental stamina; (3) human compassion; and
(4) the ability to communicate with people from all walks of life. This list is by no means exhaustive but serves to illustrate the high performance at "A" level is an inappropriate means of prelimi-
inary screening. It is true that the profession always has, and always will, have a need for
a small number of brilliant people but one wonders how many potentially first-class
doctors fail to gain even an interview for medical school.
I would share Mr. Squire's anxiety about back-door entry to medical school and would
suggest that some attention be paid to the front door.—I am, etc.,

M. F. H. BUSH
Public Health Department,
Colchester

Breast-feeding
Sr.,—The fact that a group of skilled scientific workers should feel it necessary to
spend time, energy, and money in devising a breast milk substitute (13 October, p. 67)
makes one wonder what is happening to the real stuff which to our certain knowledge
has important biological advantages for the infant besides the production of a "correct"
bacteriological flora and pH in the infant gut. Many tons of this unsuitably infant
milk must be lost annually by failure to make proper use of human lactation.

The whole subject of the natural feeding of human infants is surrounded by an aura
of abject defeatism. Many members of the professions concerned with child health
appear to regard the promotion of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many factors in determining why women refuse to
recognize that "breast is best" for their children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the benefits
of breast-feeding as a lost cause, and much thought
and effort are spent in concocting more
elegant and expensive unnatural substitutes
for human milk. There are clearly many
factors in determining why women refuse
recognize that "breast is best" for their
children; one factor at least in their denial
of breast-milk for their children is a wide-
spread lack of knowledge of the ben