

located, and the territory worthy of exploration is quite large.

F. W. WOLL,
Secretary.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

STOMACH STONES.

THOSE who have been interested in two recent papers concerning pebbles found with the remains of ancient reptiles, may like to read the following: About fifty years ago, some dozen or more hogs were enclosed in a pen which extended into a mill race. The hogs were fed entirely with ground feed in variety—meal, bran, corn and oats or sweepings—but no clover, grass or vegetables, so-called. When slaughtered, there were found in the stomachs of several of the animals, pebbles enough in each to fill the two hands of a man, as well as smaller quantities in some instances. In these cases, this habit was attributed largely to the peculiar diet of the pigs.

W. J. BEAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: A number of instances are claimed of the retention at the present time of habits acquired in former geologic epochs in adaptation to conditions then existent but now changed, rendering the archaic habits to-day useless or even injurious. Such, for example, is the habit of certain migratory birds, in crossing the Mediterranean Sea, of following a line of 'extinct islands'; also the habit of the lemmings of Scandinavia of periodically seeking the 'lost island of Atlantis.'

Is it not *perfectly evident* that in the habit shown by seals and sea-lions of ingesting pebbles we have a retention of an ancient custom dating from the days when seals had gizzards?

MAYNARD M. METCALF.

THE METRIC SYSTEM.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In the issue of SCIENCE of October 21, page 539, is a table of the height of African pygmies. This table is in British measures, and at the close of the article in which the table occurs is this statement: "In the writer's first description of these people in 1897 there occurs a mistake

made in the conversion of the metric system to English measure."

Now I am not strictly an anthropologist, but I am interested in some features of the study, and when I take up the more substantial books on the subject, I find the measures given are metric. As physical culture is one of the points that interest me, it would be a great advantage to me if Mr. Verner had published his figures in metric terms. There would then have been no mistakes, and comparisons would have been much easier for those who approach the subject from the cosmopolitan standpoint.

Is it not about time that a paper like SCIENCE, which professes to represent the science of this country, should show a preference for the measures employed by almost all scientific workers—to the extent, at least, of printing all quantities in both systems as the medical papers often do? The matter is becoming more and more important every day. See, for example, the embarrassment caused by the two systems of measure in preparing a map of the world, *National Geographic Magazine*, October, page 407.

WM. H. SEAMAN.

SPECIAL ARTICLES.

GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION OF HISTORIC AND PRE-HISTORIC RUINS.

THE traffic in prehistoric wares from the southwest that has arisen during the past few years, with the attendant destruction of prehistoric remains, has become a matter of great concern to archeologists, who appreciate the gravity of this loss to anthropological science. Even though much of this material gathered by parties who are only commercially interested in it, eventually finds its way into public museums, its value to science is greatly reduced because of the absence of authentic records. Fortunately, a growing popular and educational interest in historic and prehistoric landmarks has arisen to assist in the preservation of these objects.

As a citizen of New Mexico who has watched with deep concern the loss of many of the incomparable archeological treasures of the southwest, I have recently taken up in a