

THE "PAN-AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS"

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: You will pardon me if I desire to draw your kind attention to the term "Pan-American Scientific Congress" as applied to the congress which, according to the last issue (No. 1,083) of SCIENCE, is to meet in the city of Washington next December. Scientific bodies are generally understood to represent bodies dealing with science or exact knowledge. Now, inasmuch as geography is a science, and geographical science teaches us that the continent of America includes lands from the northernmost tracts of British America to the southernmost areas of Patagonia, the term "Pan-American" can not be properly applied to any scientific congress, body or society which does not include all the countries and lands of the continent of America.

H. A.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Handbook of Medical Entomology. By WM. A. RILEY AND O. A. JOHANNSEN. Ithaca, N. Y., Comstock Publishing Company, 1915. Pages 1 to 348. Figures 1 to 174.

The writing of a book on a subject to which so many important contributions are being made as to medical entomology is not an easy undertaking. The author is likely to find, when he lays down his pen at the end of a chapter, that an article has appeared which makes it necessary for him to revise his statements in many important particulars. The writers of this book are both successful teachers and the experience they have had in the class room has been brought into play in the manner of presentation of the subject. As a matter of fact six years of teaching medical entomology is undoubtedly the best possible preparation for the writing of such a volume. Consequently it is not surprising, at least to those who are familiar with the work of Drs. Riley and Johannsen, that their "Handbook" is a very clear and logical treatment of the subject with which it deals.

The division of the subject into topics treated in separate chapters is most commendable. The directly poisonous species, the accidental parasites, the simple carriers of

disease, the direct inoculators of disease germs, the essential hosts of pathogenic organisms, and other groups are thus treated. The method is undoubtedly more satisfactory from the standpoint of the student than the one followed in many works on the same subject which divide the matter on the basis of the diseases transmitted. Of course it is important to consider the latter phase of the subject and this is done in the series of chapters following those dealing with the different classes of insect transmission of diseases.

The judgment of the authors has been exercised in the discussion of such diseases as poliomyelitis, pellagra, verruga, and others in which insect intervention in any important way has not been fully established. Thus they pursue a conservative course and one which must be beyond criticism by those who are inclined to minimize the importance of insect transmission of diseases.

The last part of the work includes taxonomic tables dealing with ticks, flies, bugs and other insects which are concerned in the transmission of diseases. This is an essential part of the book and will serve as a basis for the work of students for many years.

That the book is up to date is shown by the fact that though the preface is dated January, 1915, it includes, as an appendix, an important article by Stokes which appeared in a medical journal for the month of December, 1914.

The bibliography will be found most useful, although some important works, like Howard's book on the house fly, and a number of articles to which references are made in the early text, are not included.

Recently the center of interest in medical entomology has been England, and the fact that the work of Smith and Kilbourne on splenic fever in this country, of the American Army Commission which investigated yellow fever in Cuba, and of Ricketts on spotted fever, helped to lay the foundation of our knowledge has to some extent at least been overlooked. The "Handbook" places the relative contribution of different agencies in a clear light but its most important function will undoubtedly be to stimulate interest in