tussock grass, and that they devour also enormous numbers of the smaller species of seabirds (Tubinares), which nest in burrows.

I shall refer again to the rats of South Georgia in two forthcoming papers, one of which is already in type. The following references are to articles by the writer that throw light upon faunal conditions at South Georgia, and the way in which they have been affected by human agency: (1) "A Desolate Island of the Antarctic," *Amer. Mus. Journ.* XIII., 242–259, 1913. (2) "A Subantarctic Island," *Harper's Mag.* January, 1914, 165–176. (3) "Cruising in the South Atlantic," *Brooklyn Mus. Quart.* July, 1914, 83–110. (4) "A Report on the South Georgia Expedition," *Sci. Bull. Brooklyn Mus.*, II., 41–102, 1914. (5) "The Penguins of South Georgia," *Sci. Bull. Brooklyn Mus.*, II., 103–133, 1915.

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A PERSONAL AND FAMILY HISTORY REGISTER

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In SCIENCE of May 16, 1913, the writer called attention to a call made by Dr. J. Madison Taylor in an earlier issue of SCIENCE, seeking aid and cooperation in a plan to secure a body of trustworthy vital statistics, and attempted to emphasize the crying need of just such a desideratum. It is gratifying to know that the aim of Dr. Taylor is now realized, and that under the above caption he has made available a means by which such data may be intelligently compiled and made permanent. The register forms a volume, quarto in size, and well bound, with provisions and directions for recording personal and family traits, history of birth, growth, health, disease, etc., and also blanks for various supplemental data that may be considered desirable in such a history, such as photographs, clinical and dental records.

The volume closes with a timely discussion of subjects relating to human welfare, and includes such topics as The Child as a Problem to Parents, The Building of a Citizen, Environment and inherited Tendencies, Personal Hygiene, Age and Age Values, Development of the Mind, all of which are presented in terms easily understood, and at the same time without sacrificing scientific accuracy.

The writer welcomes this register as a worthy contribution toward a better understanding of the importance of human statistics in relation to the imperative necessity of both human conservation and racial betterment. The author has spared no pains, and has evidently devoted long and strenuous labor in its production, and the publishers, F. A. Davis Company, Philadelphia, have also done well their part in giving to the book their usual excellence of artistic and mechanical values.

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REWARDS FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: The American government has embarked in what will be the greatest war in its history and as such deserves and demands the unqualified support of its citizens and that every effort be made to secure such services at the minimum cost.

An effort, I believe, is being made to organize and direct the inventive skill of the American people so as to render victory more certain, save life and property and shorten the conflict. Abroad in many cases such services are rendered gratuitously but the donator in meritorious cases is rewarded by a suitable decoration. This in many case is prized more highly than a monetary reward.

Since the government is making an effort to secure such expert inventive assistance as practicable, would it not be possible to prevail upon the government to institute such a decoration and if not for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as the greatest organization competent to represent the consensus of expert opinion to do so.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Konchûgaku Hanron Jôkwan (*General Treatise on Entomology*). By DR. T. MIYAKE.

Shōkābo, Nihonbashi, Tokyo, June, 1917, 3.50 yen.

Dr. T. Miyake, of the Imperial Agricultural Experiment Station at Nishigahara, Tokyo, has just brought out an excellent book which will serve as the first part of a handbook of entomology. It is beautifully printed in Japanese, fully illustrated, and handsomely bound. It deals with the morphology, physiology and embryology of insects, a field to which, the author states, Japanese entomologists have hitherto made very few contributions. The book is therefore largely a compilation, though here and there the researches of Japanese entomologists are quoted. The work is a pioneer of its kind, and the most detailed book that has ever appeared in Japan. It covers 347 pages and contains 227 figures. The majority of the figures are borrowed from German, American, English and other writers, and are fully credited. Some of the line drawings are apparently original and are very well done.

Dr. Miyake proposes, in his second volume, to publish a brief history of entomology in Japan. He expects to publish four volumes in all, the entire work to be used as a text-book for colleges and universities. It is a pity that European and American entomologists have such a slight knowledge of the Japanese language, for the book has a very attractive appearance and many would like to consult it.

L. O. Howard

HERB-GROWING IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The British Medical Journal states that at the meeting of the Royal Society of Arts on May 2nd Mr. J. C. Shenstone, F.L.S., read a paper on herb-growing in the British empire. At the present time, he said, herbal remedies occupied a more important place in the medical and domestic practise in most European countries than they did with us. When the war broke out the discovery was made that we had become dependent upon the Central Empires not only for synthetic chemicals, but for the supply of herbal medicines formerly grown by us. Some of these plants, such as belladonna, henbane, foxglove, colchicum, and perhaps valerian and male fern, were indispensable, but although they had belonged to our native flora, or at least had been cultivated in this country from very early times, their cultivation had fallen into neglect. The same was true of less valuable plants such as the dandelion, poppy capsules, and camomile flowers. As to belladonna and henbane, it was pretty certain that their alkaloidal value could be raised considerably without increasing the cost of production, but for this purpose the cooperation of the chemist would be required. It has also been stated that the wild foxglove of this country could supply the market for digitalis. A medical friend who collected his own digitalis and prepared his own tincture had told him that he found that foxglove growing on a hot sandy bank protected by a wood gave him the best results. Experiments in producing the most active dandelion juice would be worth consideration. Liquorice, most of which came from Spain and Italy, could be cultivated in Essex and Surry, and was already grown in Yorkshire. Many valuable drugs imported from the American continent were not unsuited to our climate; *Podophyllum peltatum,* Linn., imported from America, had figured in our garden catalogues as a decorative plant. He begged medical men to give some attention, in conjunction with pharmacists and botanists, to investigating likely plants, for there could be no doubt that the varied and numerous flora of the British Empire would yield medicines of even greater value than those imported from foreign countries. Sir Robert Armstrong-Jones, who occupied the chair, said that there were eighty or one hundred medicinal herbs and plants of medicinal value; Mr. Shenstone had referred to about forty of them, but the remainder could also be grown practically within our empire. There were many reasons for the decay in the use of the medicinal herbs, but the chief was the insinuating tablet. If herb-growing were taken in hand, it should be done at once, for belladonna only paid in the second year and aconite in the third. He understood that the shortage of digitalis had now been just