

school of hygiene and public health of Johns Hopkins University. About three weeks ago the writer moved his department, that of biometry and vital statistics in the school of hygiene, into McCoy Hall, occupying the whole of the second floor of that building. On Thanksgiving Eve the writer had completed the removal to this building of all his private scientific library comprising roughly some fifteen thousand reprints and pamphlets. In the fields of biometry and genetics this library was in some respects unique owing to the fact that the writer began his activities in the field of biometry nearly twenty years ago when that branch of biological science was just getting under way, and consequently there was a completeness to the collection in that field which makes its total loss a catastrophe of overwhelming significance to the writer's scientific work.

In addition all the accumulated unpublished records of the writer's work for the past twenty years were completely destroyed. This included the records of his work in the genetics of poultry for ten years at the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station.

This second loss is, of course, wholly irremediable. The purpose of this note is to appeal to workers in the fields of genetics, biometry and vital statistics, to help in remedying the first loss in so far as it can be remedied by sending to the writer duplicates of such of their reprints as they may have available and which they were kind enough to send him before. Any help in this direction will be deeply appreciated.

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#### SOMATIC VARIATION

THE undersigned are making a study of somatic variation, using for this purpose the duplicated portions of double monsters. We are especially interested at the present time in securing photographs or accurate sketches showing the color markings on double-headed calves or other double monsters in mammals characterized by color patterns. Any information as to the existence of such specimens

from which records of this nature might be obtained would be greatly appreciated.

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#### STEINDACHNERIDION

IN 1888<sup>1</sup> we created the genus *Steindachneria* for three species of large catfishes from eastern Brazil; *St. amblyura* E. and E., from the Rio Jequitinhonha, *St. doceana* E. and E., from the Rio Doce and *St. parahybae* Steindachner, from the Rio Parahyba. Our attention was at once called to the fact that Goode, in Agassiz' "Three Cruises of the Blake," had mentioned with a brief description and no type, if we recall correctly, a Macrurid under the name *Steindachneria*. With the rules governing nomenclature in those benighted times Goode's name had no standing and we wrote Goode calling his attention to the fact. Goode replied October 1, 1888: "*Steindachneria* has never been published, though the diagnosis of the genus has been lying in manuscript for nearly two years. So we will change the name. It is not of the least consequence."

When Goode and Bean's "Oceanic Ichthyology" was issued it appeared that Goode's intentions in regard to the Macrurid *Steindachneria* had not been carried out. There upon<sup>2</sup> we proposed the name *Steindachnerella* for the Macrurid.

Times and rules have changed. Dr. David Starr Jordan recently wrote us the catfish must have a new name. We sent him the letter of G. Brown Goode whereupon Jordan replies, "Goode's letter is very nice and characteristic. But under our present rules a *nomen seminudus* holds. . . . I recommend that you give a new name to the South American genus."

Reluctantly and with effort we submit to changing opinion, realizing that it is a long time since we began to give names to the fresh water fishes of South America. There-

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Cal. Acad. Sci.* (2), I., 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Am. Naturalist*, 1897, p. 159.

fore, under the name *Steindachneridion* we rebaptize those catfish which, for thirty-one years have been nozing around on the river bottoms just north of Rio Janeiro under the improper appellation *Steindachneria*.

CARL H. EIGENMANN,  
ROSA SMITH EIGENMANN

#### ACOUSTIC EFFECTS OF WIRES

THE thorough researches of Wallace C. Sabine, of Harvard University, showed that the acoustic qualities of a room depend largely on its reverberation times for various pitches, that is, the intervals during which the repeated echos of sounds remain audible. Good corrections can usually be made by altering the sound-absorbing qualities of walls and other surfaces against which the sound waves impinge and by which they are wholly or partially reflected.

Many attempts have been made, some within very recent times, to correct faulty rooms by stretching wires across them. There seems to be no reason for supposing, a priori, that a correction can be obtained in this way. To my knowledge no quantitative experiments to settle the question have been recorded. Many architects who have not given careful attention to the work of Sabine are inclined to believe that this method, because it has been used in so many instances, must give some degree of correction.

In the course of some experiments which I made a few months ago on the faulty acoustics of the chamber of the House of Representatives in the new parliament buildings in Wellington, New Zealand, I was requested to make an experiment on the effect of wires. The committee in charge of the work knew that a chamber in the Australian parliament buildings had been fitted with wires and that they were said to function well.

No. 16 copper wires were stretched both lengthwise and crosswise six inches apart in a horizontal plane over the entire middle part of the room bounded by the galleries. This space constitutes two thirds of the cross-section of the room. 9,000 feet of wire were

used, possibly twenty times as much as would ordinarily be used in a room of this size. The reverberation times for a great variety of pitches were carefully measured both with and without wires, and were found to be the same in both cases to within about two per centum, which is not greater than the expected error of measurement.

In this particular case, therefore, the wires were without effect. I have not been able to discover any uniformity in the arrangements of wires where they have been used, and so the one described above may be considered as good as any. The probability is great that wires, however arranged, have no effect on acoustics.

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#### QUOTATIONS

##### THE HARVEIAN FESTIVAL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON

THE Harveian Festival was, for the first time since 1913, celebrated with full honors by the Royal College of Physicians of London on St. Luke's Day (October 18). The Harveian Oration has been delivered each year, but the other ceremonies have been intermitted. On this occasion the oration, delivered by Dr. Raymond Crawford, dealt with the forerunners of Harvey in antiquity. As will be seen when the full text is published in an early issue, the speaker supported the thesis that in the matter of the circulation of the blood Harvey's indebtedness to any but Aristotle was negligible. The fuller knowledge now possessed of the writings of men of science of ancient days demanded, he said a readjustment of traditional beliefs, for too much had been claimed for the ardent anatomists of the Renaissance and too little conceded to the master minds of antiquity. The oration was delivered in the library, and the speaker's development of his theme was closely followed by a large and attentive audience. Afterwards the President presented the Baly Medal to Dr. Leonard Hill, and in doing so recalled the circumstances of its foundation. William Baly was assistant physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, a Fellow of the