

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*.

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#### 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

Royal Society as well as of the Royal College of Physicians, and had attained a leading position in London when he was killed in a railway accident in 1861. Five years later Dr. Dyster presented a sum of money to the college to found a medal in Baly's memory, to be given every two years to the person deemed to have most distinguished himself in the science of physiology, especially during the two years preceding the award of the medal. The first recipient was Richard Owen; among the others were William Sharpey, Charles Darwin, Sir David Ferrier, Sir Michael Foster, Dr. W. H. Gaskell, Sir Edward Sharpey Schafer, Professor E. H. Starling, Professor Halliburton, Dr. J. S. Haldane, Professor Gowland Hopkins, and Professor W. M. Bayliss. But the medal is not restricted to British subjects, and has been awarded at various times to Claude Bernard, Carl Ludwig, R. Heidenhain, M. Schiff, Professor Pavloff (the Russian physiologist), and Professor E. Fischer. Harvey, in giving the college his patrimonial estate of Burmarsh, in Kent, in 1656, just a year before his death, enjoined that once every year a general feast should be held within the college, and that on that day an oration should be delivered exhorting the fellows and members to search and study out the secrets of Nature by way of experiment, and also, for the honor of the profession, to continue in mutual love and affection among themselves, ever remembering that *concordia res parvæ crescunt, discordia magnæ dilabuntur*. It has been the practise of the college to obey this injunction by holding a dinner of the fellows, to which the guests are invited, on St. Luke's Day. Such a dinner was held on October 18. The President (Sir Norman Moore), in proposing a toast to the guests, dealt briefly with the changes and terrible events of the years since 1913, and remarked incidentally that the college had been prevented from celebrating as it would have wished the quatercentenary of its foundation, which fell on September 28, 1918. In happy sentences, illumined by many historical references, he showed how the college had always manifested its attachment to literature. He reminded

hearers that Linacre—who, with the aid of Cardinal Wolsey, obtained from Henry VIII. the charter of incorporation—was one of the earliest Greek scholars in this country, and the friend of such men as Erasmus, More and Tunstall. Ever since the college had shown its attachment to learning, and had never wanted among its fellows men of literary distinction and wide scholarship. The toast was acknowledged by Sir J. J. Thomson, President of the Royal Society, who vindicated the claims of medicine to be accounted an independent science, bringing to its task for the prevention and relief of human suffering special methods of observation and experiment, upon which the art of the physician is founded. The toast was acknowledged also by Mr. J. C. Bailey, the editor of *Cowper*. The health of the Harveian orator was given in a brilliant and sympathetic speech by the senior censor, Sir Wilmot Herringham, and briefly acknowledged by Dr. Crawford.—*The British Medical Journal*.

#### SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

*Konchûgaku Hanron Jôkwan (General Treatise on Entomology)*. By DR. T. MIYAKE. Shokabo, Nihonbashi, Tokyo, Vol. II., 1919.

IN SCIENCE for August 3, 1917, is published a brief review of the first volume of this excellent work by Dr. Miyake, of the Imperial Agricultural Experiment Station at Nishigahara, Tokyo. The second volume has just appeared, and includes a discussion of insects' relations to plants, animals and man, with methods of general study, classification and collecting. It also includes a history of entomology in foreign countries and also in the older days in Japan. Although published in Japanese, much of it will be intelligible to the American reader through the abundant illustrations, which, of course, constitute a universal language. Dr. Miyake expects to publish two additional volumes, and the work as a whole will be an admirable compendium for the students of entomology in Japan. He has done pioneer work in many directions, the educational value of which is very high.

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