

## CHOMATOLOGY, SOIL SCIENCE

As one brought up in Greece and educated there as far as the baccalaureate degree, I have been especially interested in the recent discussion of the term "pedology" as applied to soil science. The contributions of Shaw,<sup>1</sup> Weir<sup>2</sup> and Peter<sup>3</sup> have shown quite adequately the ambiguity which now exists in the meaning of this term. If it were the most appropriate and precise term, there might be a reason for making some special effort to get it away from medicine and establish its use to designate soil science. As a matter of fact it does not really convey the meaning of soil science as that term is now used.

Whatever might be said in defense of a very general term to embrace the study of soils with no reference to their fundamental significance in plant life, the fact remains that the soil scientists are primarily those interested in plant relations, especially in agriculture. To be sure, the geologist has some interest in soil as the final degradation product of rocks, or as the progenitor of sediments. The engineer is concerned with earth as the material of embankments, dams, excavations and the like. But when we speak of soil science we but rarely and incidentally have these matters in mind. Soil science is a much more precise term than that and means the

science of the soil as it relates to organisms living therein, and predominantly as it concerns agriculture. It would seem wholly desirable that any term with the λόγος ending should convey this precise shade of meaning.

Pedology, agrology and humology are all terms which do not describe what we have in mind when we say soil science. "Εδαφος, the root for the suggested edaphology, is a collective term for ground including soil, and edaphology is fairly appropriate. Choology might serve, since its root word χοῦς means earth or soil. It is the word used in that passage in Genesis descriptive of the creation of man to denote the substance from which man was made; the King James's version translates this word as dust. The most appropriate Greek word is χῶμα, genitive χώματος. Both in classical and modern Greek this word signifies soil as the botanist and agriculturist use the term. Chomatology, therefore, is the most significant term we could adopt.

It has the advantages of being free from any entanglements and ambiguity, easy to pronounce and precise in its meaning.

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## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

NOTES FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF CANADA

DR. R. M. ANDERSON, chief of division of biology, has received notification of his election as an honorary member of the Ornithological Society of Dresden.

Dr. M. O. Malte, chief botanist, National Herbarium, will attend the International Botanical Congress at London, in July, 1930, and also visit botanical institutions and friends in Sweden, Denmark and other countries.

Mr. P. A. Taverner, ornithologist, left the middle of May for the terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway, at Churchill, Manitoba, and will spend the summer in ornithological work on the west side of Hudson Bay with two assistants.

Dr. Morten P. Porsild, director of the Danish Arctic Station at Godhavn, Disko, Greenland, for many years, is spending several months in Ottawa, assisting in the determination of 15,000 to 20,000

sheets of botanical specimens collected by his sons, A. E. and R. T. Porsild, while on reindeer investigations for the Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch, Department of the Interior, Ottawa, in Alaska and Mackenzie district, Canada, in 1925-28, and by A. E. Porsild in James Bay and Hudson Bay in 1929. The specimens will be retained in the National Herbarium. Dr. Porsild will return to Godhavn on the S. S. *Beothic*, which will visit the Eastern Arctic on its annual patrol, sailing from North Sydney, N. S., late in July.

Mr. Hamilton M. Laing, of Comox, and Mr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, of North Vancouver, B. C., collected small mammals and birds in the Tobacco Plains region of southeastern British Columbia in April and May for the museum. Mr. Laing began work as park naturalist in National Parks of Canada on June 1, and will be stationed at Jasper Park and Rocky Mountains Park at Banff, Alberta, for the remainder of the season. Mr. McTaggart-Cowan will continue work for the National Museum of Canada until September 30.

Mr. J. Dewey Soper, of Ottawa, who spent 1924-26 as naturalist for the museum in the Cumberland

<sup>1</sup> Chas. F. Shaw, Is "Pedology" Soil Science? *Jour. Amer. Soc. Agron.*, 22: 235-238, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> W. W. Weir, "Soil Science," *SCIENCE*, 71: 218, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> A. M. Peter, "Soil Science," *SCIENCE*, 71: 218, 1930.

Sound region of Baffin Island, and 1928-29 in Cape Dorset and Foxe Channel region for the Department of the Interior, will leave in July for Lake Harbour, Baffin Land, north side of Hudson Strait, where he will spend two years as investigator, North West

Territories and Yukon Branch, Department of the Interior. One of the results of Mr. Soper's 1928-29 expedition was the discovery of the hitherto unknown nesting grounds of the blue goose.

CORRESPONDENT

## QUOTATIONS

### THE DETROIT SESSION OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

THE multitude of provisions for instruction and entertainment at the Detroit session was perhaps the most striking feature of the annual session of the association just held in that city. Some activity was scheduled for satisfactory use of every moment of the visitor's time, and it remained only for him to employ his time to his own best advantage. From the first two days, during which a series of extraordinary clinical lectures and talking motion pictures were available, to the last three days, in which the fifteen scientific sections provided more than three hundred manuscripts on various phases of medical progress, scientific discourse occupied the auditorium and the halls in the Masonic Temple. At the same time, the greatest number of scientific and technical exhibits ever assembled under the auspices of the association held forth in every available space on several floors in the same building. For the evening the Michigan State Medical Society provided a past-presidents' dinner for the opening night, given exclusively for the officers and the House of Delegates; the opening meeting with the presentation of emblems to past-presidents took place on Tuesday night; numerous fraternity and other social entertainments were held on Wednesday; the president's reception on Thursday, and boat rides, motor bus trips and private tours were provided by the Local Committee on Arrange-

ments for the intervening periods, if any. Obviously, complete utilization of such provisions placed a tax on the physical endurance of the convention guest, and a course of rest and physical training in anticipation of the session was almost necessary to enable the too enthusiastic conventionist to survive successfully the session's attractions. The meetings of the House of Delegates were marked primarily by the demonstration of confidence in the work of the Board of Trustees and by special interest in the economic problems affecting the progress of medicine to-day. Thus, resolutions concerning the care of veterans' legislation, federal aid on maternal welfare, mental hygiene, and similar problems dominated the picture. It is significant that the resolution concerning aid for veterans adopted by the House of Delegates was specifically referred to by the President of the United States in his message vetoing the veterans' bill. The attendance of more than five thousand physicians in a time of financial stress indicates the manner in which the medical profession accepts the importance of this annual session. The appreciation of all of those who attended must be tendered to the Local Committee on Arrangements, which contributed freely of its funds, its time and its efforts to build the success of the meeting. The hospitality shown has established the profession of Detroit in the affections of the Fellows of the American Medical Association.—*Journal of the American Medical Association*.

## SOCIETIES AND MEETINGS

### THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE SOCIETY MEETING IN DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

THE History of Science Society met concurrently with the American Historical Association at the forty-fourth annual meeting at Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on December 30 and 31, 1929, and January 1, 1930.

This is the tenth anniversary of the History of Science group of the American Historical Association which was inaugurated in 1920 by Dr. Lynn Thorndike, of Columbia University, president of the History of Science Society. The following year a similar section was instituted by the American Associa-

tion for the Advancement of Science at the Chicago meeting with the late Dr. William A. Loey as chairman of the committee, later vice-president of Section L.

The interest in the history of science movement has grown so steadily ever since that finally both groups were combined to form the History of Science Society, under the direction of Dr. David Eugene Smith at Columbia University in 1924. The society now enjoys its sixth anniversary, and a membership close to seven hundred, consisting of many of the most distinguished scholars and scientists of the world.

The short program presented at Durham on January 1 was entirely devoted to the history of early