3. Be it further resolved: that the Medical Library Association feels it imperative to draw attention to the fact that, unless further reductions in the prices of German periodicals are made so that these prices are more in line with those of other countries, many libraries will be compelled on economic grounds to cancel subscriptions. It is also the opinion of this Association that reductions in price should not be dependent on a reduction of volume content alone. The fact is also deplored that the advance list of maximum prices for 1935 showed, in the case of several journals of great importance to medical libraries, a substantial increase in price as compared with 1934.

4. Be it further resolved: that, while the Medical Library Association realizes that the announcement of a maximum yearly price is a distinct gain, the desired goal is a fixed yearly price for periodicals, announced in advance.

At the meeting of the second International Congress of Libraries and Bibliography held in Spain from May 20 to 30, the question of the over-production of literature in periodicals from the point of view of libraries was taken up. The papers presented and the discussions during the meeting showed that there is undoubtedly an over-production in material appearing in the scientific journals of practically all countries, and certain factors were pointed out as contributing causes. My paper surveying the present status of the publication of literature in the medical and biological sciences, which was read before the International Congress, showed an approximate total of 2,221 periodicals current to-day in these sciences. There are 511 periodicals published currently in the United States, 288 in Germany, 248 in France, 198 in Italy, 137 in the British Isles, 81 in Russia, 62 in Spain and 59 in the Scandinavian countries. Certain unfortunate factors concerned in the problem of the publication of medical and biological literature were also discussed. The detailed report of the Committee on Periodicals and Serial Publications, Medical Library Association, of which Janet Doe, C. F. Wylde and S. V. Larkey are members, will appear in the official publication of the second International Congress of Libraries and Bibliography, and the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association,* n.s., V. 24.

EILEEN R. CUNNINGHAM,
Chairman

THE TIME TO CUT DANDELIONS

THE spring of 1935 was especially favorable to dandelions, and in many cases they must have outstripped the lawn mower, for a number of people asked me whether dandelion heads cut off in full flower would produce viable seeds. Nobody seemed to know the answer, so it was thought desirable to make some tests to determine the facts. Accordingly, heads of this plant were cut off, leaving peduncles about 5 cm long on them. Heads were chosen in the following stages of development: 1. Almost ready to open. 2. Flowers fully open. 3. Heads just closed and corollas withering. 4. Heads fully closed and all corollas withered. 5. Corollas falling.

To allow rather better chances of development than are given on the average lawn, the heads were laid on sphagnum, which was kept moist. Here they were kept until they had dried. Examination showed them in the following conditions: 1. Achenes shriveled, no development of pappus or of beak of achene supporting pappus. Corollas withered but not abscissed. 2. Achenes shriveled. Corollas abscissed. Beaks of achenes from 2 to 2.5 mm long. 3. Achenes less shriveled than in Lot 2 but not normal in appearance. Beaks from 2 to 3 mm long. Corollas abscissed. 4. Achenes little shriveled. Corollas abscissed. Beaks from 2.5 to 3.5 mm long. 5. Achenes not shriveled. Corollas abscissed. Beaks from 3 to 4 mm long. Pappus expanded to form a small head, much more touseled than in normal ones.

The achenes were removed from the heads of each lot and put on moist filter paper to germinate. One lot was kept in the light and another in the dark. After 10 days all the achenes were found to have decayed. None showed any sign of normal embryos when they were dissected.

Dissection of achenes of normal heads, from the flowers of which all the corollas had abscissed, and in which the pappus was extended out almost to the involucre tips, showed that the embryos were very small. Many were minute and the largest were not more than one fifth full size. Apparently then, until the white of the dandelion pappus begins to extend beyond the green involucre tips, the heads may be cut and allowed to dry on the lawn without any danger of spreading the weed.

CARL D. LA RUE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

IODIZED SALT A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

IN the year 1833 there appeared an article by the French chemist, Boussingault,[1] in which he described the value of iodized salt in the prevention of goiter.

This brilliant young French chemist, Boussingault, who later distinguished himself in the field of biochemistry, was born in Paris in 1802. As a young man he was sent to South America by an English mining firm. While studying geological structures at various altitudes, he was surprised at the huge goiters in some villages and the absence of this affliction in others. He analyzed the salt consumed in various places and

[1] M. Boussingault, *Ann. de Chem. et de Phys.*, 54: 163–177, 1833.

readily came to the conclusion that the iodine of the salt was the effective agent in preventing enlarged thyroids.

Furthermore, he noted that those subject to goiter usually lived at high altitudes and drank glacial water. He also claimed that the Indian natives were not subject to goiter.

Not only did Boussingault point out the value of iodized salt, but he also suggested that iodine be added to deficient salt and suggested a test to estimate the amount present in order to avoid a toxic level. Furthermore, he noted that sea salt tended to lose its iodine as it passed through the channels of commerce to the consumer.

Unfortunately, this interesting early contribution was not even mentioned, as far as we can find, by Chatin, who wrote so many papers in this field about the middle of the last century. It seems also to have escaped the notice of such reviewers as Von Fellenberg.[2]

One can only speculate concerning the human suffering that might have been evaded if some eminent physician had noted this contribution of the French chemist at an early date.

C. M. McCAY

ANIMAL NUTRITION LABORATORY
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

A NEW COSMIC PHENOMENON

READERS of SCIENCE may be interested in the possible occurrence of a cosmic phenomenon between October 21 and 25. The phenomenon has evinced itself as a remarkable vagary of radio transmission occurring recently at regular intervals, separated in time by twice the sun's rotation period. It is a world-wide phenomenon, or more accurately semi-worldwide, as it involves all high-frequency radio transmission over the illuminated half of the globe and not the dark half. Depending apparently on some solar emanation lasting only a few minutes, its thorough elucidation appears to call for the study of such cosmic data as solar activity, terrestrial magnetism, atmospheric ionization, aurora, earth currents, etc., as well as high-frequency radio reception.

The radio evidence of the phenomenon is a sudden disappearance of high-frequency long-distance radio signals for several minutes, the complete process of fading out and reappearing occupying about 15 minutes. It occurred on March 20, May 12, July 6 and August 30. The time intervals between these dates are close to 54 days, twice the period of rotation of the sun; the next such occurrence should therefore be around October 21 to 25.

It is suggested to those concerned with observations in the above fields that they make special efforts to make continuous observations on these dates. I would be very glad if any one observing any marked anomalies occurring in a period of a few minutes would communicate with me.

J. H. DELLINGER,
Chief, Radio Section
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

AMERICAN BIRDS

The American Eagle. A Study in Natural and Civil History. By FRANCIS HOBART HERRICK. xx + 267 pp., 94 figs. D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1934. $3.50.

Wild Birds at Home. By FRANCIS HOBART HERRICK. xxiv + 345 pp., 138 figs. D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1935. $4.00.

THESE two books by the same author are very different in scope. The first is, in a sense, a monument to one majestic bird, which is our national emblem. The second is an important contribution to philosophic ornithology presented in popular form.

"The American Eagle" is a study, primarily of the home life, of the bald eagle (*Haliæetus leucocephalus*) made at Vermilion, Ohio, on the shore of Lake Erie. As an observation post an open-work steel tower ninety feet high was erected beside a nest or eyrie, and by its means a large amount of data and a remarkable and beautiful series of photographs, here reproduced, were obtained from a distance of some thirty-eight feet.

With most wild birds, the nest is merely a cradle for the young, and being built in spring or early summer in the north temperate zone, it is seldom occupied more than two or three weeks. . . . The eagle's eyrie is not only cradle and bed-chamber for the young during the better part of three months, but it is the home and castle of the mated pair, for many years, it may be, or for as long as the eyrie endures. The eagle's union is believed to be a life partnership, and their eyrie is built upon each year until, with many annual increments, it may become an enormous structure. There is the remarkable record of the eagles at Vermilion, Ohio, whose Great Eyrie was occupied thirty-six years without a break and attained an estimated weight of two tons.

For the eaglets the eyrie serves a much wider purpose than that just intimated, for it is also their gymnasium and flying practice-field, to which its great size and par-

[2] Von Fellenberg, *Ergeb. d. Physiol.*, 25: 182, 1926.