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*The American Association for the Advancement of Science:*

*Mathematicians and Poetry and Drama:* PROFESSOR

RAYMOND CLARE ARCHIBALD ..... 19

*Obituary:*

*Charles Edward Munroe:* DR. C. A. BROWNE. *Recent Deaths and Memorials* ..... 26

*Scientific Events:*

*The Oceanographic Vessel Culver of the Bermuda Biological Station; Farm Research Laboratories of the U. S. Department of Agriculture; Annual Report of the Director of Field Museum, Chicago; The New York Meeting of the American Anthropological Association; Dr. Vannevar Bush, President of the Carnegie Institution of Washington* ..... 28

*Scientific Notes and News* ..... 30

*Discussion:*

*The Utilization of Microfilms in Scientific Research:* DR. ATHERTON SEIDELL. *Improvement of Science Instruction:* PROFESSOR LLOYD W. TAYLOR. *The Benid Meteorite:* BEN H. WILSON. *What did the Blue Jay do with the Nut?:* PROFESSOR ARNOLD GESELL ..... 32

*Special Articles:*

*Mammary Carcinoma in the Rat with Metastasis Induced by Estrogen:* DR. CHARLES F. GESCHICKTER. *Fumaric Acid Formation Associated with Sexual-*

*ity in a Strain of Rhizopus Nigricans:* JACKSON W. FOSTER and PROFESSOR SELMAN A. WAKSMAN. *Gas Bubbles as Nuclei for "Oolites":* EDWIN B. ECKEL. *The Relation of Maximum Crushing Strength of Wood to the Degree of Swelling Induced by Various Chemicals:* DR. H. D. ERICKSON ..... 35

*Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:*

*A Simple Method for Filing Miniature Negatives and Microfilm Records in Strips:* DR. LEE R. DICE. *Control of Mold in Food for Drosophilae:* PROFESSOR J. C. CROSS ..... 39

*Science News* ..... 6

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## MATHEMATICIANS, AND POETRY AND DRAMA<sup>1</sup>

By Professor RAYMOND CLARE ARCHIBALD

BROWN UNIVERSITY

IN general reading for a number of years I have been interested in accumulating information concerning, firstly, those who had not only achieved something noteworthy in mathematics but had also written verses or dramas; secondly, poems about mathematicians; and thirdly, the numerous incidental citations of mathematicians in poetry by poets of more or less distinction. Such general reading has not been confined to any one language, and translations of poetical or dramatic work of mathematicians were within the scope of my search. The large amount of material collected is in more than a score of languages, from the time of Pythagoras and his "Golden Verses"<sup>2</sup> down

to the present. It is my purpose to give you some idea of the nature of this material. I am not aware that any one else has previously discussed this general theme.

The relations between poetry and mathematics have been considered by a number of writers;<sup>3</sup> but this is

and Golden Verses together with the Life of Hierocles, and his Commentaries upon the Verses. Collected out of the choicest manuscripts and translated into French, with annotations. By M. Dacier. Now done into English. The Golden Verses translated from the Greek," by N. Rowe. London, 1707. Greek text and Rowe's translation, pp. 149-164 + i-xi. "Pythagoras," a play by Martin Slaughter, was first acted in London in 1596.

<sup>1</sup> Address of the retiring vice-president and chairman of Section L (Historical and Philological Sciences), American Association for the Advancement of Science, delivered at a joint meeting of Sections A and L, of the American Mathematical Society and of the Mathematical Association of America; illustrated by 22 lantern slides. Richmond, Va., December 28, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., "The Life of Pythagoras, with his Symbols

<sup>3</sup> E. J. Wilczynski, "Poetry and Mathematics," *The University Chronicle*, 3: 191-204, 1900; read at the annual meeting of the Science Association May 2, 1900. I. Ionescu, "Matematica si poezia," *Gazeta Matematica*, 17: "Supplement," pp. 1-3, May 15, 1912. D. E. Smith, (a) "Mathematics and Poetry," Florence, 1922, 8 pp.; (b) "Poetry of Mathematics," *Mathematics Teacher*, 19: 291-296, 1926; (c) "The Poetry of Mathematics and other Essays," New York, 1934, "The Poetry of Mathematics," pp. 1-13; contains practically all of (a). S.

referring to the whole roll of film which it contains. These data may include catalogue number or other designating mark of the roll, date and place of taking, photographer, kind of film, type of developer and any other pertinent information.

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LEE R. DICE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

### CONTROL OF MOLD IN FOOD FOR DROSOPHILAE

IN many genetics laboratories where *Drosophila* are used for breeding purposes food is still made with bananas as one of the principal ingredients. Banana food molds easily, and when it is kept for more than a day or two the mold usually gets started before the flies have time to produce larvae. The result is that often the flies do not breed well. In this laboratory molds of various species are exceptionally abundant, due largely to climatic conditions. The offenders are usually species of *Rhizopus*, *Mucor* and *Aspergillus*. Conditions have been so unfavorable that a special study was made for controlling molds in general. Contamination seemed to be from various sources, so that more than one method of control was necessary. Food is now made as follows with very pleasing results:

In a pyrex beaker 750 cc of water and 75 cc of

white Karo syrup are mixed. To this is added 20 grams of shredded agar. The mixture is boiled until the agar is liquefied. In a separate container two medium-sized bananas are crushed and 25 cc to 30 cc of 95 per cent. alcohol is added. The bananas and alcohol are well stirred and allowed to stand about twenty minutes and are then added to the water-syrup-agar mixture after this mixture has quit boiling and has cooled to about 90 degrees Centigrade. The food amounts to about one liter in volume and is ready for bottling immediately. It is best to autoclave the bottles and cotton plugs, but this is not absolutely necessary. Since alcohol has been added already, it is not necessary to spray the food with yeast, as is done in some laboratories; and since no yeast is present carbon dioxide is not formed. The food adheres well to the bottom of the bottle and the flies do not stick to it easily. It has been kept in this laboratory almost two weeks without being covered with mold; however, when the bottles are not autoclaved contamination may appear within four or five days.

J. C. CROSS

THE TEXAS COLLEGE OF ARTS AND INDUSTRIES,  
KINGSVILLE, TEXAS

### BOOKS RECEIVED

- BUROS, OSCAR K. *Research and Statistical Methodology; Books and Reviews, 1933-1938*. Pp. vi+100. Rutgers University Press. \$1.25.
- Comité National Français et Comité National Marocain de Géodésie et Géophysique; *Années 1933-34-35-36*. Pp. 408. Comité Français, Paris.
- EVANS, JAMES H. *Constructive Metal Work*. Pp. viii+95. Illustrated. Arnold, London. \$3.00.
- FRAZER, R. A., W. J. DUNCAN and A. R. COLLAR. *Elementary Matrices and Some Applications to Dynamics and Differential Equations*. Pp. xvi+416. Illustrated. Cambridge University Press, Macmillan. \$8.50.
- Inventory; An Appraisal of Results of the Works Progress Administration*. Pp. 100. Illustrated. The Administration, Washington.
- KRUMBEIN, W. C. and F. J. PETTJOHN. *Manual of Sedimentary Petrography*. Pp. xiv+549. 265 figures. Appleton-Century. \$6.50.
- LOWER, A. R. M., W. A. CARROTHERS and S. A. SAUNDERS. *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest; A History of the Lumber Trade between Canada and the United States*. Pp. xxvii+377. Yale University Press. \$3.75.
- NAGEL, ERNEST. *Principles of the Theory of Probability; International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, Vol. 1, No. 6*. Pp. vii+80. University of Chicago Press. \$1.00.
- NEDHAM, PAUL R. *Trout Streams; Conditions that Determine their Productivity and Suggestions for Stream and Lake Management*. Pp. x+233. 74 figures. Comstock. \$3.00.
- RAISZ, ERWIN. *General Cartography*. Pp. x+370. 200 figures. McGraw-Hill. \$4.00.
- STANDLEY, PAUL C. *Flora of Costa Rica; Botanical Series Vol. XVIII, Part IV, November, 1938, Publication 429*. Pp. 1137-1571. Field Museum of Natural History. \$2.50.
- WILLIAMS, JOSEPH J. *The Maroons of Jamaica; Vol. III, No. 4, of Anthropological Series, Boston College Graduate School*. Pp. 379-480. Boston College Press. \$1.00.

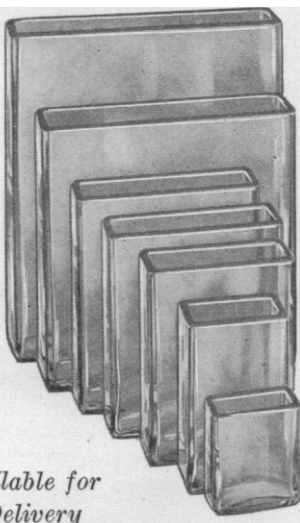
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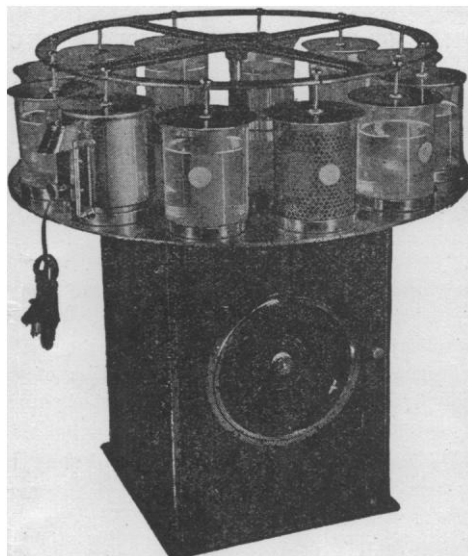
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