Hospital; Clarence Selby, industrial physician, General Motors Corporation; William D. Stroud, clinician, Philadelphia, Pa.

The first service to scientific research which the unit on gerontology is undertaking is to conduct a survey of the present trends of active and contemplated investigations into the problems of aging in American scientific institutions. This survey is intended to ascertain just what problems are being studied and what methods of approach are being applied. There is no desire to learn, in advance of publication, the data being developed in these specific undertakings.

In addition to these studies, many investigations which do not pertain directly to aging should yield data useful to workers in gerontology. The unit on gerontology is especially interested in knowing of these indirectly related studies, the full implications of which are far too often obscured in their published titles.

Inquiries about studies related to aging are being sent to scientists in the basic biologic sciences as well as to clinical investigators, for much fundamental work upon the processes, mechanisms and consequences of senescence is probably going on in the sciences of botany, zoology, physiology, pharmacology, psychology, etc. From the clinical viewpoint, our greatest concern is with those studies dealing with health evaluation, mensuration of functional capacity (including criteria of "physiologic age") and with those diseases whose incidence increases sharply in later life (the so-called "degenerative disorders").

Critical analysis of the information elicited by such a survey may be expected to serve several valuable purposes. It should assist in bringing together in closer cooperation investigators interested in related problems, especially when widely divergent methods of approach are being utilized. The survey will likewise emphasize the urgent need for greatly augmented support for significant studies of these vitally important problems of senescence.

The broad and general pattern of the problems being investigated will undoubtedly reveal a number of neglected "blank spots" which may justify special emphasis in the future. Analysis of the data of the survey will also be an invaluable aid in formulating future research programs, both at the National Institute of Health and elsewhere.

From preliminary inquiries it is observed that there is a great but largely latent and scattered interest in the problems of aging. It is the hope of the unit of gerontology of the National Institute of Health that the present survey may serve to effectively aid the promotion of closer cooperation of the scientists interested in these fields.

Information concerning subjects under investigation and the methods of approach is earnestly solicited.

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SHALL ZOOLOGY REVERT TO THE TIME OF LINNAEUS?

WHEN I read "A Short Zoology of Tahiti in the Society Islands," by Anthony Curtiss,[1] it was clear to me that others would feel as I did when I placed it back on my library shelf.

This little book contains six chapters, namely, mammals, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects and worms and in its classification of these reverts to the time of Linnaeus about 1758.

The attitude and cultural approach to the zoology of Tahiti may be gained from the first two paragraphs of the Introduction:

> Zoology is the study of animal life, as distinguished from botany (the study of plants) and mineralogy (the study of minerals). It is a branch of learning that has interested many of the so-called scientists, because by means of a distortion of it they hope to prove many theories of theirs. As all persons who are virtuous and honest must desire to disprove the distorted and mistaken notions taught by the professors and blindly and superstitiously received by their pupils, it is well that some people should study zoology and report their findings. This little book is only a small beginning; in my greater zoology I shall disprove more of their fables. . . . Too great a use of little understood words, and the employ of too involved a system of classification, are the marks of collegiate duncery. But we need some system, for the sake of convenience, and some technical words, for things having no ordinary names.
>
> As for the system, I use a modified form of the system of Linnaeus, who gave us the binomial (two-term) system that most "scientists" pretend to follow, though they have befogged it with many unconvincing modifications of their own. For instance, they will tell you that spiders and crabs are not insects. Linnaeus, the first to use the word *insecta* in a scientific sense, used it to include all animals having jointed legs. Even the "scientists" admit that spiders, crabs, etc., belong to one group, to which insects (as they restrict the term) also belong; they call this group *arthropods*. But why not use the old Linnaean word *insects*, that everybody understands? I suppose that they do not use it, because they imagine it sounds better to use fancy Greek words that few people know.

Chapter V, on insects, is somewhat more inclusive than the heading suggests as judged from the following quotation, p. 140:

> Following the system of Linnaeus, which is easier to understand than the wild nonsense of the "scientists," I shall include under the term *insects* all those animals

[1] Brooklyn, N. Y.: Guide Printing Company, pp. xvi + 193, 1938.

(moving forms of life) that have no backbone, yet, in their adult stage at least, have jointed legs; while I shall consider as lower forms of life, or *worms*, as Linnaeus calls them (Vermes), those that have neither backbones nor (in their adult stage) jointed legs.

On pages xv and xvi he states:

The system I follow is that of Linnaeus, a little modified, as in the fourth edition of my little New England zoology; but this is the first time I have brought Linnean, that is, binomial technical names, into the text of my work. If I use the word *family*, as I may from time to time, I always mean the *genus*, in the binomial sense, as used in Linnaeus. With that other invention, the non-Linnean family, with its everlasting *-idae*, and her sister *-inae*, I have nothing to do. This *-idae* and *-inae* are tag ends that the "scientists" hang onto genera to make up super-genera such as good old Linnaeus never heard of.

This book will cause zoologists much concern because many new binomial names are published with descriptions. Among the fishes (listed on pp. 32–139) only six previous Linnean names were used, and 120 new binomial names are introduced. Many new names are given for the other animals described, probably all of which will be included with the list of synonyms for well-known species of Tahiti. This has been done by Henry W. Fowler for the fishes in a forthcoming publication of his. Curtiss, apparently unacquainted with the extensive zoological literature on South Pacific animals, gave new names to those living around Tahiti because suitable ones were not printed in 1758, and later works are unknown to him.

LEONARD P. SCHULTZ

PALEONTOLOGICAL DISCOVERY IN SIBERIA

A FEW days ago the undersigned received from the U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, in Moscow, the following translation of a recent report on a rare paleontological find in Siberia, which may be of wider interest. It reads as follows:

NOVOSIBIRSK, SEPTEMBER 19

Members of the Komsomol Young Communist League of the "Iskra" Collective Farm discovered the complete skeleton of an ancient fossil animal in a layer of black silt at a depth of six meters. This discovery was made on the bank of the small river Oyesh, near the village of Vakhrushevo, eighty kilometers from Novosibirsk. The skeleton has been handed over to the Novosibirsk Museum, where it has been restored. Scientists have now established the fact that this is a skeleton of a representative of a large species of fossil elephant (*elephas antiquus*) which, in the early glacial epoch, was of wide occurrence. This elephant is one of the predecessors of the mammoth and differs from it by a lesser curvature of the tusks.

In spite of the young age of this elephant, as is evidenced by the jaws and the non-ossified cartilage parts of the body, the height of the skeleton is 270 cm, its length, to the base of the tusks, is 325 cm, the length of the tusk is 150 cm. The skull is smaller than that of a mammoth. The upper and lower jaws of the unearthed specimen have four teeth each.

Scientific workers have left Novosibirsk to study the layer of soil where the elephant was imbedded. . . .

In an interview with a *Tass* correspondent, Academician A. A. Borisyak, director of the Paleontological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the U. S. S. R., stated the following:

"The skeleton unearthed near Novosibirsk is of outstanding scientific value. This is the first discovery in the Soviet Union of an entire fossil elephant referring to the beginning of the Quaternary period. Hitherto we could judge of such elephants only by separate teeth which were found."

Upon learning of this valuable discovery the Paleontological Institute communicated with the Novosibirsk Museum and intends to send there a scientific collaborator in order to study this specimen of *elephas antiquus* on the spot.

A. HRDLIČKA

U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

FLORA OF INDIANA

Flora of Indiana. By CHARLES C. DEAM. 1236 pp. 2247 maps. Indianapolis: Department of Conservation, Division of Forestry. 1940. $3.50.

THIS impressive volume represents the work of many years, as the distribution maps of individual species of flowering plants and ferns attest. It will undoubtedly serve as the model for state floras of the future, and the numbering of genera according to the system of Dalla Torre and Harms provides for interpolation of genera as one wishes. Conversely, the "Flora of Indiana" provides a background for arranging genera in the herbarium in a systematic rather than an alphabetic way. Indiana includes a large proportion of the species of eastern United States, and the comprehensive text references make it a sort of dictionary for the latest recognized names and their place of publication. Nothing, it seems, has been forgotten in making the work complete. There are keys to families and genera, summaries of the herbaria examined, statistical accounts of collectors in Indiana, glossaries, a register of obsolete locality names, and so on. The thirty-six pages of introduction to the