

calcium than rats fed on a diet in which other greens containing negligible oxalates replaced spinach. Rats fed on spinach also excreted considerable oxalate in the urine and feces. From these results it appears that the kidney stones developing in tadpoles may be composed of calcium oxalate.

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SCIENTIFIC MEN IN THE HALL OF FAME

THE only scientists in the Hall of Fame at New York University to date are: John James Audubon, Asa Gray, Louis Agassiz, Joseph Henry, Maria Mitchell, Matthew Fontaine Maury and Simon Newcomb.

There are 110 distinguished Americans who constitute the College of Electors, and at their ninth quinquennial election, reported at the end of last year, they elected (with 86 votes) only Stephen Collins Foster, the first musician to enter. Dr. Walter Reed, hero of the fight against yellow fever; Henry David Thoreau, naturalist and author; and J. Willard Gibbs, physicist and chemist, whose work was so important that Professor Wilhelm Ostwald years ago printed a German translation of it—all these came very close to getting the 65 votes essential to election.

The next election is in 1945. In the interim it behooves scientists to see to it that the College of Electors has adequate information to enable them to give full and fair consideration to scientists eligible for this honor. Audubon and Reed were included in

the postage stamp series honoring scientists, along with Jane Addams, Luther Burbank and Dr. Crawford H. Long.

JEROME ALEXANDER

FIRE HAZARD IN STERILIZATION BY DI-ETHYLENE GLYCOL

WHEN I read the article entitled "Sterilization of Surgical Instruments by Di-ethylene Glycol" by Charles Gurchot and Newton D. Mellers (*SCIENCE*, November 29, 1940, p. 516) I had an uneasy feeling and made a cursory search for reported properties of di-ethylene glycol. I found values of its flash-point cited as low as 135° C.

Since the flash-point depends considerably upon the exact conditions of test, I made a few rough experiments planned to approximate the conditions in a sterilizer. Heated in an evaporating dish to 145° C. di-ethylene glycol caught fire readily and burned with increasing vigor until I extinguished it.

At temperatures as low as 135° the fumes ignited on contact with a flame. Between 140° and 145° continued burning with increasing vigor sometimes occurred and at 145° and above always occurred.

I feel, therefore, that your readers should be warned that the use of di-ethylene glycol as recommended involves a very definite fire hazard. Under some conditions it might result in a serious fire.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

EMBRYOLOGY OF INSECTS AND MYRIAPODS

Embryology of Insects and Myriapods. The developmental history of insects, centipedes, and millepedes from egg deposition to hatching. By OSKAR A. JOHANNSSEN, professor of entomology, emeritus, and FERDINAND H. BUTT, instructor in insect morphology, embryology and histology, Cornell University. Pp. xi+462, 370 figs. New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. 1941. \$5.00.

THE study of the embryonic development of animals, insensibly to most students of the subject, has differentiated into two phases, one of which is embryogeny, the other embryology. The first is what the growing animal does, and how it does it; the second is a mental product of the embryologists, an attempt to explain the nature, the meaning or the significance of the demonstrated facts of embryogeny. Our knowledge of embryogeny has had a steady growth; embryology has gone through many revolutions. Though the book here discussed is entitled "Embryology of Insects and Myriapods," its subject-matter is mostly embryogeny,

which is what it should be as a suitable text for college students. Wherever controverted subjects or theoretical interpretations are given, both sides, or all sides, are presented without an effort to settle the question or to direct the opinion of the reader. The essential facts that are known concerning the embryonic development of the insects and the myriapods are clearly stated and excellently illustrated. The reader will find, too, that in many aspects of arthropod development, even among the insects, there is yet much to be done in determining precisely just what the facts are. It is a valuable feature of a text-book to emphasize discrepancies of observation or opinion, since it will suggest to students lines of investigation that might profitably be taken up as subjects for further study. The illustrations of the text are remarkably good, and their uniformity of style contributes much to the general appearance of the book. Nearly all the pictures seem to be new, but many have a familiar look about them, like something old with a new finish; the mystery is explained in the preface, where the authors state that the figures taken from the works of others have all been redrawn and in many cases "conventionalized."