can Society of Civil Engineers, the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

THE Buenos Aires correspondent of the *Journal* of the American Medical Association writes: "The scientific relations between Argentina and Brazil are close. Groups of physicians of each country make visits to the other country for the exchange of scientific knowledge. Books of Brazilian medicine have been recently translated into Spanish under the honorary direction of Dr. Mariano Castex, professor of clinical medicine of the Faculty of Medicine of Buenos Aires, and under the active direction of Dr. Egidio S. Mazzei and Elyeser Magalhaes. The volumes of this collection have been translated into Spanish with the aim of enabling Spanish-speaking physicians to know some of the most important books of their Brazilian colleagues. Dr. José Silveira's book, 'Atelectasia y Tuberculosis Pulmonar,' is the first one of this collection to be translated. Three other books are going to be translated and published in the near future: (1) 'Enfermedades del Hígado: Diagnóstico, Patologoa, Terapéutica,' by Dr. Clementino Fraga; (2) 'Aneurismas Aórticos,' by Dr. A. de Almeida Prado, and (3) 'Propedéutica Radiológica,' by Professor Manuel de Abreu. All these books are edited by the publishing house 'El Ateneo' of Buenos Aires."

The Times, London, reports that as a gesture of appreciation from British doctors to their colleagues in Russia a book containing articles on British war medicine has been prepared by the Anglo-Soviet Medical Council. The council held a reception in London on November 23, when Madame Maisky was presented with the book and the Honorable Ivor Montagu spoke on "Scientific and Educational Films in the U.S.S.R."

DISCUSSION

SORA, NEAR-VICTIM OF A FISH

ON September 15, 1942, an immature male specimen of sora (*Porzana carolina*) was transmitted to the New York State Museum by Vernon Haskins, of East Durham, Greene County, New York. This bird was recovered from the highway near his home, where evidently it had been struck by a passing automobile the preceding night. The carcass was intact and examination of the internal organs revealed only slight trauma and bleeding with the skeletal parts in perfect condition. Measurements in millimeters are as follows: length, 203; wing, 109; tail, 53; tarsus, 29; bill, 19. The bird was very fat and weighed 73.4 grams.

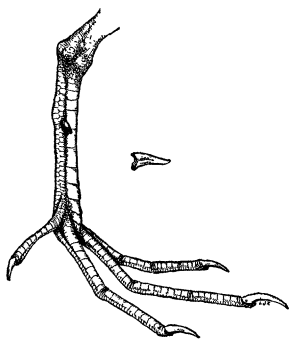

FIG. 1. Left tarsus of sora showing position of the fish tooth; also a lateral view of the tooth itself. About two-thirds natural size.

Upon skinning the rail an interesting point came to light. One-half inch below the proximal end of the posterior aspect of the left tibio-tarsus a small, slightly curved and sharply pointed tooth-like structure had pierced both sides of the tarsal envelope and the contained tendon. The point of this foreign element had entered from the outer side of the tarsus and projected for a distance of about one millimeter beyond the inner tarsal covering. Hidden beneath the outer tarsal covering was the base of the element. Some slight discoloration marked its points of entrance and exit.

Removal and detailed examination of the offending foreign body revealed that it was the tooth of a fish, evidently a northern or some other species of pike (*Esox*). The broad base, shape, peculiar curvature, vertical basal striations and evident mode of insertion all provide evidence for this conclusion. The original length of this tooth was about 6 millimeters and the greatest basal width 1.5 millimeters; unfortunately, its extreme tip—perhaps one-half millimeter in length—was accidentally broken off at the time the tooth was extracted from the tarsus.

That the injury had been suffered not long before was evident from the still slightly blood-red internal appearance of the recently lost tooth and the fairly fresh condition of the rail's small leg wound. Since the tooth either had penetrated or abraded the tendon, it is possible that in walking the bird had suffered some slight inconvenience or possibly pain.

One can only surmise the manner in which the tooth became thus embedded in the leg of the rail. It is well known that pike are voracious feeders with carnivorous proclivities. The available evidence suggests that the bird while walking in the water may have been set upon by one of these fish which scored only a "near miss" for its efforts. Later, the rail suffered an even more ignominious end as the victim of a speeding motor car.

The sora here discussed is now included in the

zoological exhibit collections of the New York State Museum, Accession No. 6342.

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THE TROPICAL CHIGOE IN CALIFORNIA

Tunga penetrans (Linnaeus), a tropical and subtropical siphonapterous pest, commonly known as chigger, jigger, chigoe or sand flea, has heretofore remained unreported as adult from the continental United States,[1] except for one case from New Orleans.[2] Thirteen gravid females[a] were recently (April 7, 1942) recovered from the eyelids of a Pacific horned owl (*Bubo virginianus pacificus* Cassin), at Oceanside, San Diego County, California, by Kenneth Stager.

The life history and etiology of this flea[3] are of special interest in the present emergency. Its habitat is essentially warm, dry, sandy places. Although considered free living as larvae (with the one reported exception[2]), adults attack not only birds, but also other warm-blooded animals, including man. Though not known to be a vector of pathogenic organisms, its entry beneath the epidermis and invasion of the stratum lucidum produces irritating skin ulcers which are frequently complicated by secondary invaders.

Southern California is known to have many outdoor camping grounds. Camp directors should therefore be on the alert for its possible appearance in infested areas. Also, with the erection of many open-air military camps in the southwest, it seems particularly desirable that special studies as to the distribution in this country be made, and precautions taken to prevent its spread.

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ON NUMBERING BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS

I AM reading a book on meteorology, and I come upon this sentence, "Fig. 50b shows the typical features of a towering cumulus (see also Fig. 25)." Now Fig. 50b is right under the eye; but Fig. 25? Evidently it is somewhere in the fore part of the book. I am at page 81, and I make a chance dive into the earlier pages and come upon page 47. It happens to carry Fig. 32. So I thumb my way back page by page until I come to Fig. 25 on page 32. This happens to be a small book; in one of 600 pages it would be a longer chase. Now this all takes time, interrupts the attention and, with me, gives rise to an emotional turbulence which may eventuate in profanity. I am sure that many others have had the same experience, barring perhaps the emotional turbulence. "A law ought to be passed," not against the use of profanity under such circumstances, but against the use of a separate series of numbers for illustrations.

For there is no logical reason for a separate numbering of the illustrations. They are not regularly spaced as are the pages. One can not at once turn to a numbered figure in a distant part of the book, as he can to a numbered page. Their use is time-consuming and irritating.

Besides, there is a better way of handling the matter. Figures in the text should be referred to by their page number. Fig. 25, above, would then be Fig. p. 32; or even Fig. 32. One could then turn to it at once. If there were more than one figure on a page they could be distinguished as A, B, C, etc.

This suggestion concerns especially text-books in physical science and technology. It is addressed to the writers and publishers of such books. It is the duty of author and publisher to reduce the effort of the reader in every possible way; and here is one way. Any unnecessary taking of the reader's time and energy is larceny, stealing; is immoral.

Some of the best texts are already dropping the serial numbering of figures. Smith and Phillips's splendid "North America" (Harcourt, Brace and Company) is one: it omits the numbers, and when there is more than one illustration on the page it distinguishes them by letters. The use of the old system of consecutively numbered figures hangs on because of inertia and lack of imagination. Writers of text-books on science ought to be able to climb out of this rut.

LEWIS G. WESTGATE

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

TOPOLOGY

Algebraic Topology. By SOLOMON LEFSCHETZ. vi + 389 pp. Vol. 27. Colloquium Publications of the American Mathematical Society. 1942. $6.00.

Analytic Topology. By G. T. WHYBURN. x + 278 pp. Vol. 28. Colloquium Publications of the American Mathematical Society. 1942. $4.75.

THESE two mathematical volumes, written by lead-

[1] I. Fox, "Fleas of Eastern United States," p. 12. Iowa State Coll. Press, Ames, Iowa, 1940.

[2] E. C. Faust and T. A. Maxwell, Report of a case, *Arch. Dermat. Syph.*, pp. 94–97, 1930.

[3] P. H. Manson-Bahr, "Manson's Tropical Diseases. A Manual of the Diseases of Warm Climates." Eleventh edition. Williams and Wilkins Company, pp. 700–703, 1940.

[a] After proof was received, a communication (in litt.) from the U. S. Health Service in Montana suggests this might be *Hectopsylla psittaci*, a nearly related flea from South America. Without males certain identity is difficult.