about the thrills and the accomplishments of the little old lady in far-away China, who fought in the last war and was decorated by three governments?

Obituary notices of prominent people are often written on the basis of information available in "Who's Who in America." Applying the line test to "Who's Who" brings out some interesting figures. Henry Ford has 28 lines; Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., 49; C. F. Williams, Cincinnati, 50; William Fortune, of Indianapolis, 117. Franklin Delano Roosevelt rates only 35 lines.

In 1938 Lily Pons had 11 lines, while Shirley Temple had 22. In 1942 Miss Pons had 19, while Miss Temple had increased to 25. Miss Pons is gradually catching up. In 1938 Jack Benny had 10 lines, Fred Allen 4. The 1942 figures indicate waning popularity of the former with increasing fame of the latter, since Benny now has, 9, Allen 6. In 1938 Douglas Fairbanks had 21 lines, while his son had 26. Jerome Kern rates 53 lines against Fritz Kreisler's 19. E. Phillips Oppenheim has more than twice as many as Ernest Hemingway. One of Koussevitsky's associate directors has 30 lines against Koussevitsky's 26. Toscanini rates 22.

These are glaring discrepancies. There are many others. I realize that the statisticians might try to show that, taking the book as a whole, they are not of statistical significance. Inequalities do not show as much in "American Men of Science," since the data in all cases are much briefer. However, I do gather the impression from hasty perusal that if one is an M.D. one is likely to have a longer sketch. If this is so, we must add "profession" to "longevity" and "political affiliations" as a factor in determining the number of glory lines.

The purpose of the present communication is not to take issue with the conclusions of the two reports under discussion but to call attention to possible discrepancies between "statistical information" and "conclusions based on statistics."

WARREN T. VAUGHAN

RICHMOND, VA.

A NEED FOR MORE UNIFORM USAGE OF WORDS OF INDEFINITE MEANING

ON page 560 of SCIENCE, issue for December 18, 1942, Mr. Ackerman had a communication entitled "A Need for more Uniform Usage of Words of Indefinite Meaning." It seems to me that as soon as we assign mathematical values to the words which he mentioned they lose their meaning as "words." While at first thought the temptation is to agree with Mr. Ackerman, yet after a more careful consideration, it seems as though assigning definite mathematical values to these words were unnecessary and misleading. If one knows the approximate percentage of the occurrence of a phenomenon it is just as easy to use the numbers as words designating them. For example, it would be just as easy to say, "it occurred only one or two per cent. of the time" as it would be to say "it occurred very few times." We could just as easily say "it occurred anywhere from 10 to 25 per cent." as to say "it occurred frequently." Every one of course must agree that "all" can mean only 100 per cent., and that "about half" should mean from 45 to 55 per cent.

The use of such words when the approximate percentage is known might also be misleading. In discussing certain quantities, one invariably thinks of percentages, while in discussing others, numbers may be of greater importance than percentages. Take for example: in the observation of 100 phenomena, let us say one of them did not follow the particular law being investigated. We would then say that "seldom was the law disobeyed." Supposing only ten observations had been made and one did not agree with the general law, how should we express this in words? According to Mr. Ackerman, we would say "The law was frequently disobeyed." Was it?

It seems to me that the difficulty is not with the general meaning of such words as "seldom," "slightly," "frequently," etc., but rather with the men who use them. Since they are only used when the exact percentage or the exact number is unknown, I believe it would be folly to try to assign even approximate values to them.

May I suggest that we should learn to say "approximately 40 per cent. . . . " rather than "very many."

FERDINAND JEHLE

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

AVIAN MALARIA

IN an article entitled, "The Occurrence of Intravascular Agglutinations in Avian Malaria," which appeared in the issue of SCIENCE of December 4, 1942, Dr. Arthur L. Lack, Jr., reported certain work done by him while an instructor in the department of anatomy in the University of Tennessee. The publication is not credited to the University of Tennessee, but footnotes acknowledging support of the work by the Tennessee Valley Authority through the University of Tennessee lead to the implication that these organizations were cognizant of the publication. Neither the Tennessee Valley Authority nor the University of Tennessee had an opportunity to review the report before it was published and do not assume responsibility for it.

T. P. NASH, JR.,
Dean

SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE