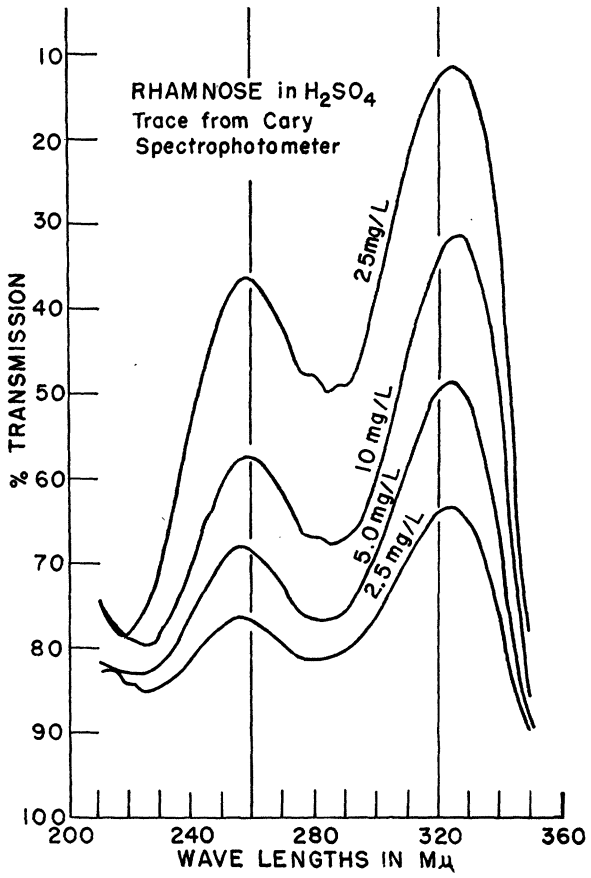

Fig. 2.

magnesium of this order may occur. The normal concentration of magnesium in sea water is about 1.3 g/liter. However, magnesium is picked up very readily by a great number of adsorbents and concentrated easily to 50 or 100 times its normal concentration. Exceedingly thorough dialysis is necessary to remove all traces of magnesium.

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On Scientific Writing

Apropos of the Apr. 23 issue of *Science,* concerned largely with the problems of scientific writing, I find in my files the following quotation from a source unknown to me. Other readers may also find this of interest, and perhaps one of them can inform me of its authorship.

ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

In promulgating esoteric cogitations and articulating superficial sentimentalities, philosophical and psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity, jejune babblement and asinine affectations. Let your extemporaneous discantings and unpremeditated expiations have intelligibility and vivacity without thrasonical bombast. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic propensity, psittaceous vacuity and ventriloquial verbosity. Shun double-entendre, imprudent jocosity, and pestiferous polluting profanity either obscure or apparent. Don't call names or use big words, but talk plainly, sensibly and truthfully. All of which is remindful of Disraeli's philippic for Gladstone: He was a sophisticated rhetorician inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity.

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May I be permitted to give my impressions of Florence Moog's recent communication [*Science* **119**, 567 (Apr. 23, 1954)]. That it engages in rather broad generalizations to contend that scientists write poorly and that the censure should have limited itself logically to "some write poorly" is not to be gainsaid. However, when Dr. Moog, to buttress her critical position, brings in such works as Darwin's *Origin of Species,* and inquires whether they weren't highly effective in their own day, she misses the point involved in the problem. Certainly a work such as the *Origin* was most effective; in fact, it was epoch-making even in the early days of its inception; but, the fact remains that if it had been written in a more craftsmanship manner, it would have carried its message across with more simplicity to people who weren't possessed of the avid interest and curiosity of scientists.

Also, it is curious that the very issue in which Dr. Moog has her interesting letter carries an exceptionally valuable contribution by Eugene S. McCartney, titled "Does writing make an exact man?" [p. 525], in which the author points out some of the verbiage used in scientific articles, and so forth, which obfuscates the substance. That when one has things clearly in his mind, he can express them clearly may pertain to many instances; but, I seriously doubt whether this, too, isn't falling into the category of untenable generalization.

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Geochronological Significance of Extinct Natural Radioactivity*

An extinct natural radionuclide is defined as an unstable nuclide whose half-life is sufficiently short to have resulted in complete decay since the presumed origin of the elements, yet sufficiently long for its disintegration to have produced effects in nature that can

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