

expense for many years and has published a number of papers relating to it.

An invitation has been extended to medical men and others the world over to cooperate. This cooperation, while of the greatest importance, and indeed in default of any of the other support so much needed—of prime importance—can only be disconnected and very incomplete.

Residence in the tropics and in a leprosy center, together with the hearty cooperation of Dr. Howard, of Washington, Dr. Carter, of the University of Texas at Galveston, and others has made possible a good beginning by the writer. Indeed, an interesting result already to be noted is that one of the common rat fleas of the southern gulf ports is the same as the common species in Havana, and of the group of tropical rat fleas closely related to *Pulex irritans*, and thus very likely to bite human beings when opportunity offers. An utter lack of extensive collections from human beings at any of these places makes useful, well-founded deductions on this point impossible. We hope to get these collections in some way. The simplicity of the apparatus needed (tweezers, small homœopathic vials of alcohol and several rat traps) should make extensive collections possible to all who are interested in the subject. Some have complained of the quick movements of the living insects, and the rapidity with which they desert dead animals, as a serious hindrance to the collecting. A little strong pyrethrum powder will remedy these difficulties. Scattered through the fur of an animal, it immediately disables the fleas, and their expiring efforts serve to carry them out, to fall on white paper, where they may be readily and rapidly gathered. As large series as possible should be taken and full data as to locality, host, etc., should be inserted in every vial. A report will be returned for all specimens sent either to the writer or to Dr. Howard, Government Entomologist in Washington, D. C., U. S. A., and full published credit will later be given for every sending.

C. F. BAKER.

ESTACION AGRONOMICA,
SANTIAGO DE LAS VEGAS, CUBA.

SPECIAL ARTICLES.

NOTE ON THE HABITS OF AN OPHIDIID (CUSKEEL).

IN 1871 Professor A. E. Verrill (*Am. Nat.*, 5, p. 399) published a note of half a dozen lines on the *Ophidium marginatum*, remarking that 'this species appears to be very rare and its habits little known.' He "dug two specimens out of the sand near low-water mark, where they burrowed to the depth of a foot or more. When placed upon moist sand, they burrowed into it *tail foremost* with surprising rapidity, disappearing in an instant." These are the only data known to me respecting the habits of any member of the ophidioid family. I was, therefore, much interested to receive confirmatory and additional information about the same species from Dr. E. W. Gudger, of Waynesville, N. C.

It is quite possible, if not probable, that the apparent rarity of the species results from the uncommon manner of life rather than from actual paucity in numbers. Persons generally do not look for fishes in the bare sand.

It is to be hoped that one of the investigators at the Beaufort Laboratory will obtain other specimens and study the habits and food of the species. It is probable that the period of activity is night. It would, therefore, be desirable to examine the stomach-contents as early in the morning as possible.

THEO. GILL.

A NOTE ON THE HABITS OF RISSOLA MARGINATA.

ON July 13, 1904, while walking on a sand spit, exposed at low water and lying northwest of the island on which is situated the laboratory of the United States Bureau of Fisheries at Beaufort, N. C., I noticed, thrust out of the wet sand, a conically pointed head which instantly disappeared. Throwing myself down, I immediately began with my bare hands to dig the wet sand where I had seen the head. The animal went down tail first, and so rapidly that I began to despair of capturing it. Presently, however, when I had dug below water level, this little fish was brought out in a great double handful of sand. When taken into the laboratory and put into an aquarium of run-