

THE "PAN-AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS"

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: You will pardon me if I desire to draw your kind attention to the term "Pan-American Scientific Congress" as applied to the congress which, according to the last issue (No. 1,083) of SCIENCE, is to meet in the city of Washington next December. Scientific bodies are generally understood to represent bodies dealing with science or exact knowledge. Now, inasmuch as geography is a science, and geographical science teaches us that the continent of America includes lands from the northernmost tracts of British America to the southernmost areas of Patagonia, the term "Pan-American" can not be properly applied to any scientific congress, body or society which does not include all the countries and lands of the continent of America.

H. A.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Handbook of Medical Entomology. By WM. A. RILEY AND O. A. JOHANNSEN. Ithaca, N. Y., Comstock Publishing Company, 1915. Pages 1 to 348. Figures 1 to 174.

The writing of a book on a subject to which so many important contributions are being made as to medical entomology is not an easy undertaking. The author is likely to find, when he lays down his pen at the end of a chapter, that an article has appeared which makes it necessary for him to revise his statements in many important particulars. The writers of this book are both successful teachers and the experience they have had in the class room has been brought into play in the manner of presentation of the subject. As a matter of fact six years of teaching medical entomology is undoubtedly the best possible preparation for the writing of such a volume. Consequently it is not surprising, at least to those who are familiar with the work of Drs. Riley and Johannsen, that their "Handbook" is a very clear and logical treatment of the subject with which it deals.

The division of the subject into topics treated in separate chapters is most commendable. The directly poisonous species, the accidental parasites, the simple carriers of

disease, the direct inoculators of disease germs, the essential hosts of pathogenic organisms, and other groups are thus treated. The method is undoubtedly more satisfactory from the standpoint of the student than the one followed in many works on the same subject which divide the matter on the basis of the diseases transmitted. Of course it is important to consider the latter phase of the subject and this is done in the series of chapters following those dealing with the different classes of insect transmission of diseases.

The judgment of the authors has been exercised in the discussion of such diseases as poliomyelitis, pellagra, verruga, and others in which insect intervention in any important way has not been fully established. Thus they pursue a conservative course and one which must be beyond criticism by those who are inclined to minimize the importance of insect transmission of diseases.

The last part of the work includes taxonomic tables dealing with ticks, flies, bugs and other insects which are concerned in the transmission of diseases. This is an essential part of the book and will serve as a basis for the work of students for many years.

That the book is up to date is shown by the fact that though the preface is dated January, 1915, it includes, as an appendix, an important article by Stokes which appeared in a medical journal for the month of December, 1914.

The bibliography will be found most useful, although some important works, like Howard's book on the house fly, and a number of articles to which references are made in the early text, are not included.

Recently the center of interest in medical entomology has been England, and the fact that the work of Smith and Kilbourne on splenic fever in this country, of the American Army Commission which investigated yellow fever in Cuba, and of Ricketts on spotted fever, helped to lay the foundation of our knowledge has to some extent at least been overlooked. The "Handbook" places the relative contribution of different agencies in a clear light but its most important function will undoubtedly be to stimulate interest in

further investigations and to supply a reliable and much needed aid. W. H. HUNTER

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Abwehrfermente. Das Auftreten blutfremder Substrate und Fermente im tierischen Organismus unter experimentellen, physiologischen und pathologischen Bedingungen. Von EMIL ABDERHALDEN. Fourth, considerably enlarged edition. Published by Julius Springer, Berlin, 1914. Pp. xxiv + 404; with 55 text-figures and four plates.

In the fourth edition of this book, which first appeared about two years ago as a modest pamphlet, especial stress has been laid upon the necessary technique for demonstrating the specific ferments which form according to Abderhalden when any body-alien, tissue-alien or blood-alien proteid, carbohydrate or fat is brought into intimate contact with the tissues of an animal organism.¹ Numerous drawings accompany the text and detailed instructions are given for the various preparations and manipulations which must always be carried out with rigid aseptic precautions and with adequate controls. Sources of error are exhaustively treated and indeed are so numerous that perhaps any failure could be explained by some slip in technique. This technical part occupies one half of the book, the other half being devoted to an exposition of the theory and its numerous stimulating corollaries.

It is unfortunate that the method has not been simplified, for its difficulty is probably the main cause of the disagreement which still exists among competent investigators about the availability of Abderhalden's methods in the serodiagnosis of organic functions.

The widespread attention which Abderhalden's important work has aroused is well shown by the appended bibliography, which, though incomplete, numbers more than 300 titles.

The book is written with expository skill and with charm, and will be read with interest and profit even by those who are in scientific disagreement with its teachings. JOHN AUER

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¹ See the review of the second edition, *SCIENCE*, 1913, N. S., XXXVIII., No. 988, p. 820.

Sun Lore of All Ages. By WILLIAM TYLER OLCOTT. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1914. Pp. xiii + 346. Illustrated.

The setting of the dimmed sun in the west at night and its rising, refreshed and glowing, in the east on the following morning, presented a mystery to the early peoples of the world: to the dwellers in ancient Egypt, to the Incas of Peru, and to the Indians of our western plains. This mystery has been solved in many ways and has given rise to numberless legends, traditions and superstitions. These traditions Mr. Olcott has traced, the legends and superstitions he has collected and compared, and has formed the whole into a very readable and attractive book. The work, which is a worthy successor to the author's "Star Lore of All Ages"; is well printed, beautifully illustrated, and forms an attractive addition to any library.

CHAS. LANE POOR

HEMOGLOBINOPHILIC BACTERIA

THE hemophilic or more properly hemoglobinophilic bacteria comprise a rather large group of bacilli which grow only in an artificial medium containing hemoglobin. This group does not include the many bacteria that, while growing better in media containing blood or blood serum, will also grow in media not containing hemoglobin. Its representative organism and by far its most important member is the influenza bacillus (*B. influenzae*) which was discovered by Pfeiffer (hence commonly called Pfeiffer's bacillus) in the respiratory tract of patients afflicted with influenza during the great pandemic in 1889-90. Not only did he discover and isolate this organism at that time but he definitely proved its hemoglobinophilic character a property of bacteria hitherto unknown.

In his classical paper¹ in which he reported these researches he also described other organisms differing in certain respects from the true influenza bacilli, but similar in being hemoglobinophilic. These he called pseudoinfluenza bacilli. Since then these pseudo forms, which

¹ *Zeit. f. Hygiene*, 1893, 13, p. 357.