

in plura dirimi debet, tum nomen antea commune manebit vulgatissimæ et officinali plantæ.

It must be evident that when Fabricius removed *Cimex lectularius* from *Cimex* and placed it in a new genus *Acanthia*, he disregarded the rules of Linnæus, and his classification in this instance was rejected by Latreille and by many later writers. What would be thought of a naturalist who proposed to remove the dog from the Linnæan genus *Canis*, and to retain that generic name for the hyæna, which was included in the genus by Linnæus? According to Mr. Kirkaldy's contention this is the nomenclature we should be bound to adopt by the "rule of priority" if the individual who proposed the absurdity happened to be the first to divide the original genus.

Mr. Kirkaldy has not pointed out in what respect *C. lectularius* does not conform to the description of the genus *Cimex* as set forth by the founder. He probably refers to the mention of four wings amongst the generic characters, *C. lectularius* being apterous or nearly so. The objection is invalid in view of the facts already stated, and of the inclusion of the species in the genus by Linnæus, who prominently recorded the absence of wings in this case.

The subordinate question as to the type of *Acanthia* has been discussed *ad nauseam*. Anyone who feels interested in the matter will find a full history by Reuter in the *Wiener Entomologische Zeitung*, vol. i., 1882, p. 301. By an argument rather different from that above given, Reuter came to the same conclusion as to the type of *Cimex*. Mr. Kirkaldy's last proposal, to use *Clinocoris* for *C. lectularius*, is a curious illustration of his method. *Clinocoris* was suggested in the "*Hemiptera Sueciæ*" as a name to be substituted for the Fabrician *Acanthia*, because "*forsan convenientius judicabitur nomen Clinocoris.*" But this substitution of one name for another on the score of convenience is absolutely in defiance of the "rule of priority."

W. T. B.

Spawning of the Plaice.

THE plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*) in the open-air pond at the Port Erin Biological Station started spawning on March 3, and those at the Piel (Lancashire) Sea-Fish Hatchery (under cover) on March 1. This is about a week earlier than last year (March 9). It would be interesting to know how this record compares with that of fish in the sea. At the time of writing I have no returns that will give the information for the Irish Sea, though I hope to know later. Probably the officials of the International Investigation will be able to speak of the condition in the North Sea, and those of the Plymouth Biological Station in regard to the English Channel.

W. A. HERDMAN.

Liverpool, March 8.

Preliminary Measurement of the Short Wave-lengths discovered by Schumann.

FOR the past few years the writer has been engaged in an attempt to measure the short wave-lengths discovered by Dr. Victor Schumann, and very recently the attempt has proved successful.

Working in an atmosphere of hydrogen with a concave grating ruled on speculum metal, an "end-on" tube filled with hydrogen gives numerous lines below the aluminium group at 1854 Ångström units.

The shortest of these wave-lengths so far observed by the writer has a value 1206 Ångström units. Thus the measurable spectrum has been extended by 648 units.

It is interesting to note that, contrary to expectation, speculum metal is able to reflect these very short wave-lengths to a considerable degree.

The writer has in preparation a complete list of the new wave-lengths. He has also good hopes of still further extending the spectrum.

THEODORE LYMAN.

Jefferson Physical Laboratory, Harvard University,
February 29.

Women and Sanitary Science.

IN your issue of February 11 a reference was made to a recent report of the Subcommittee on Technical Instruction for Women appointed by the Technical Education Board of the London County Council, quoting one of the recom-

mendations of the committee that "Classes be established for the training of women in hygiene and sanitation with a view to their taking up the occupation of sanitary, workshop or public health inspectors, or of rent collectors."

May I urge in this connection the great importance of all training in hygiene and sanitation being thoroughly scientific in character and based upon practical teaching in chemistry, physics, physiology, and bacteriology?

"Hygiene," to quote Dr. T. M. Legge, H.M. Medical Inspector of Factories, "is not a science in itself, but is the meeting point where several exact sciences widely distinct from each other meet and yield up that element they possess which can be of practical use in the prevention of disease and the preservation of health."

At every turn the inspector or health worker is brought face to face with facts which can only be appreciated in their true light by a person who has had some considerable scientific training, and the greater their scientific knowledge the more enlightened and efficient will their work be.

Bedford College in 1895 established a scientific course in hygiene for women. While amply providing for the necessary practical demonstrations in hygiene proper, we continue to attach great importance to laboratory work in chemistry, physics, physiology, and bacteriology, as we believe the latter to be essential to a thorough teaching of hygiene, and necessary if women are to have a first-hand knowledge of the subject and become intelligent and effective workers.

ETHEL HURLBATT.

Bedford College for Women, York Place, Baker Street, W.

Aërial Tubers on the Potato.

I DO not know whether the appearance of tubers on the stems of potatoes as well as underground is a frequent occurrence, but last season I noticed several plants presenting this appearance. One of the plants had a large number of underground tubers as well as those appearing above ground. The abnormal tubers were purple in colour; each one had several "eyes," and one or two minute green leaves showed in each "eye." The garden is a very stiff clay. The season was very wet as the potatoes were maturing; in fact, the ground was too soft to allow of digging at the proper time. My explanation is that the great quantity of water on the ground destroyed the balance between producing power in the leaves and storage power in the normal tubers, and that the surplus production deposited itself in the stems, which at the selected spots became modified tubers.

W. TRAYLEN.

Guildford, Western Australia, January 28.

THE appearance of tubers on the haulm in the axils of the leaves is not uncommon, and as the bud and the tuber are homologous, the circumstance is only what might be expected.

In this country it is generally considered that some injury to the subterranean part of the plant, as by the spade or fork, or perhaps by wire worm or other destructive insect, is the inducing cause of the production of aërial tubers. I am, however, not aware whether this has been demonstrably proved.

M. T. M.

March 8.

THE CEYLON PEARL FISHERIES AND THEIR ADMINISTRATION.¹

A VERY remarkable feature of the Ceylon pearl fisheries has been their uncertainty and intermittent character. Thus only thirty-six fisheries took place during the nineteenth century, or, put in another way, for just half a century the fishery banks lay barren. These blank years sometimes followed one another in dreary succession, as may be seen from the fact that for seventeen years—from 1837 to 1854—and again for nine years—from 1864 to 1873—practically no fishing was done. For a decade before the investigation embodied in this report was begun the beds lay

¹ "Report to the Government of Ceylon on the Pearl Oyster Fisheries of the Gulf of Manaar." By W. A. Herdman, D.Sc., F.R.S., &c. Part Pp. xii+307. (London: Royal Society, 1903.)