his head—of work and dress very extraordinary, and altogether different from that of these realms. And connected with this room there are also corridors very well worked of stone with very large pillars which are so strong that they are still standing; and for over four and even six leagues around the proud edifices there is a great amount of worked stone; from which it appears that there were in these parts a people of great intelligence, industry, and courage, and great cities, which long ages swallowed up or turned into what our Spaniards found when they made the discovery."

Science News Letter, September 16, 1933

PUBLIC HEALTH

Black Rat Horde Menaces England With Black Death

BLACK rats can at any moment loose the Black Death upon England. All that is needed is for one plague-infected rat to elude the anti-rat precautions in the Port of London and make its landing from some ship from an oriental city where the bubonic plague is still common.

This warning was issued by M. A. C. Hinton, deputy keeper in zoology of the British Museum and one of the world's leading authorities on rats.

Black rats, Mr. Hinton declared, now swarm in London. They have largely supplanted the brown or Norway rats, which were formerly the dominant species in the rodent population. This change was attributed by Mr. Hinton to the development of modern buildings, which with their open skylights and their network of cables are ideal homes for the black rat, which was formerly a tree-dwelling species. The brown rat, a denizen of the sewers, is pretty effectually excluded from the buildings of present-day London. Man has thereby unwittingly aided a deadly enemy, for the fleas harbored by the black rat carry bubonic plague from rat to rat, and finally from rat to man.

Mr. Hinton strongly advocated a government campaign to eradicate rats and to make buildings really rat-proof. Such a drive, he said, would be like taking out an insurance policy on the whole nation.

Science News Letter, September 16, 1933

Sand flies, which bite so viciously, are best controlled by destroying their breeding places, says the Department of Agriculture.

PHYSICS

New Physics Troubled by Confusion in Nomenclature

Electron, With Its Negative Charge, Seems Misnomer Since Discovery of Its Opposite Twin, the Positron

PHYSICISTS are engaged in a family row over what the babies should be named. The botanists no longer stand alone as a scientific tribe that fights over names and classification. But the physicists can blame no one but themselves for having brought confusion into their speech. It all arose from their tremendous activity within the last two years of prying out several new particles from the chemical entity of matter, the atom.

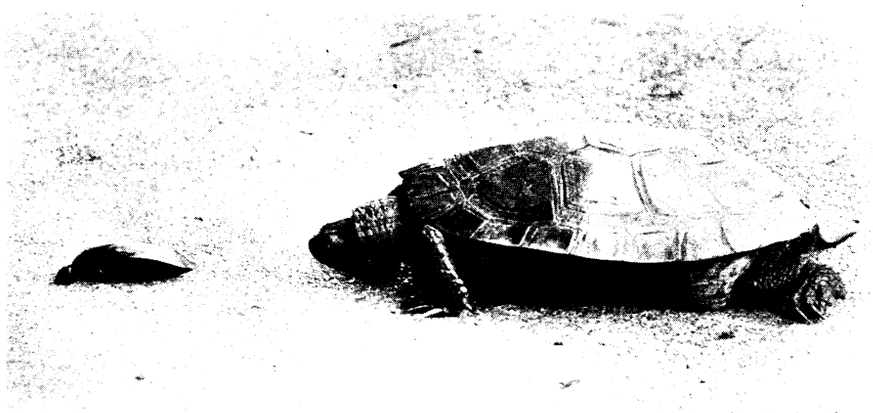
Now that they have isolated these particles and have proved their existence they are in a quandary over what to christen them. The one that is stirring up the biggest argument is the new unit of positive electricity, found by Dr. Carl D. Anderson at the California Institute of Technology just a year ago. It appears to have the same electrical charge and mass as the electron, the unit of negative electricity, which has been known for many years.

Dr. Anderson has suggested that the new positive particle be called the "positron" and the old electron be rechristened to "negatron." This was to avoid confusion with the name "electron" that was originally devoid of significance regarding polarity.

Immediately many scientists objected to the rechristening and also to the disregard of mythology inherent in the word "positron." Prof. Herbert Dingle of Imperial College of Science and Technology in South Kensington, England, suggested the name "orestron" for the new positive particle. This is mythologically correct for Orestes was the brother of Electra.

The English physicists had in the meantime contributed to the confusion, but not in such a serious manner. The discovery of the positive particle had been made from an examination of curved tracks made by cosmic rays in plowing through a box filled with water vapor and placed between the poles of a magnet. Some of the tracks were bent in the wrong way. This could be explained only by having a new positive particle. But the sporting Englishmen immediately thought of cricket and the peculiar hops that the ball takes on bouncing in front of the wicket. These are called "googlies," so the new tracks and thus the particles became "googlies" also, in English laboratory slang.

A similar argument has arisen about the names to be given to the two varities of hydrogen. The strict way of



Cornelia Clarke Photo.

LEADEN-FOOTED CHASE

Only a turtle pursuing a beetle; but isn't there something in this scene that is reminiscent of those nightmare dreams wherein you find yourself pursued by a monster, and discover that your feet are made of lead and can barely be moved; or (shifting to the turtle's viewpoint) where you are striving after a keenly desired and nearly attained goal, only to find yourself struggling against the same unconquerable lethargy?