sion in Norway. (*Lancet*, Dec. 29, 1934).

Gipsy children over four years old are rarely admitted to the homes and the extreme age limit is six. The children live in these homes until they are eleven or twelve years old, enjoying the benefits of a religious education and physically and psychically sound surroundings. About 75 per cent. of them become self-supporting without adopting the vagrant life of their parents.

The traditional mental superiority of gipsies was disproved by intelligence tests of these children. "A certain low-grade nimbleness of wit" is all they have as a class.

The outdoor life of a gipsy child does not contribute as much to his health as might have been expected. Instead of being rare, rickets was found in a third of the children examined. This is attributed to the faulty diet the children have been fed and to their being kept in the sunless, airless cabins of gipsy boats.

Although Norwegian authorities have had trouble with gipsies since far back in European history, the signs point to a future without gipsies in that country.

In the nineties of the last century there were some four thousand gipsies in Norway, according to reports, but in 1927 there were only about half that many and at present only 1,800 are found living as gipsies. Norwegian gipsies are apparently becoming stay-at-homes and will probably soon be absorbed by the rest of the population.

Science News Letter, March 30, 1935

SEISMOLOGY

Central American Quake Centered on Sea Bottom

THE EARTHQUAKE reported from several American seismograph stations on Monday, March 18, really occurred on St. Patrick's Day—though not in any Hibernian part of the world.

Its epicenter was traced to a spot on the bottom of the sea, south of Antigua, Guatemala, by scientists of the Jesuit Seismological Association, St. Louis, after studying wire reports relayed from Science Service, Washington, D. C. The time of origin was about 4:32 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, on Sunday, March 17.

Stations reporting the quake were those of Georgetown University, Washington, D. C., Canisius College, Buffalo, N. Y., and St. Louis University.

Science News Letter, March 30, 1935

CHEMISTRY

Active Principle of Ergot, Childbirth Aid, Isolated

THE ACTIVE principle of ergot, a drug once widely used in childbirth, has been isolated by H. W. Dudley, biochemist of the Medical Research Council, and Dr. Chassar Moir, London University gynecologist.

Scientists have long sought to find the substance in ergot which is responsible for its effect on the uterus. The success in this search, just reported by Dr. Moir and Mr. Dudley to the *British Medical Journal*, marks the culmination of a three-year alliance of chemistry and clinical medicine.

Ergometrine is the name of the newly-isolated substance. When given by mouth, it produces strong contractions of the uterus after eight minutes. Hypodermic injections start the contractions in four minutes, on the average.

An Alkaloid

Ergometrine belongs to the class of drugs known as alkaloids. It differs markedly from and is probably simpler than other alkaloids isolated from ergot which were thought previously to be responsible for the drug's action on the childbearing organ. These are now finally proved not to be responsible for the drug's action.

The results obtained by the English scientists are said to be in accord with the findings of an American scientist, Dr. A. K. Koff of Johns Hopkins Medical School.

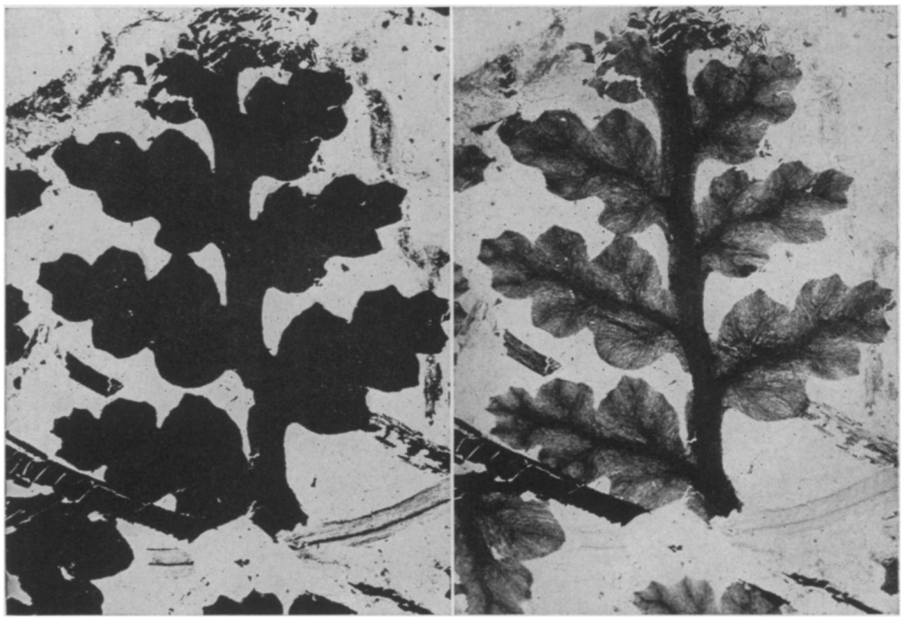
Science News Letter, March 30, 1935

ENTOMOLOGY

Chinch Bug Menace Unabated by Winter

CHINCH bugs in the grain belt states have overwintered successfully—from their own point of view. Field investigators of the bureau of entomology, U. S. Department of Agriculture, have found that winter weather has reduced their ranks by only about ten per cent., which makes no difference at all, practically speaking. Heavy infestation must therefore be expected during the coming summer.

Science News Letter, March 30, 1935



DARK IN THE LIGHT: MADE VISIBLE IN DARKNESS

Fine details of structure, hidden in photomicrographic studies of coal plants taken by ordinary light (left) stand out clearly when invisible infra-red radiation is seen through them into the camera. Photos by Prof. John Walton, Glasgow University. (See Nature, Feb. 16; SNL, March 16, p. 172)