

GENERAL SCIENCE

Asks for Outlaw of Daggers in Publishing

➤ A SCIENTIST has issued a plea for abolishing daggers in scientific publishing.

His appeal follows the receipt of a "note of commiseration" from Europe on the "sudden death" of another scientist who is very much alive.

The misunderstanding occurred when an American scientific publication placed a dagger to indicate a footnote after the scientist's name on a paper he had written.

In Europe, Dr. Charles F. Richter of the Seismological Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., explains in *Science* (April 27), the dagger after a man's name means posthumous publication.

Science News Letter, May 12, 1956

PSYCHIATRY

Soviet Psychiatrists Frustrate U. S. Colleagues

➤ AMERICAN PSYCHIATRISTS are frustrated and puzzled by Soviet psychiatrists. The frustration comes from failure of any Soviet psychiatrist to accept an invitation to come to the United States to participate in a conference on International Perspectives in Psychiatry at the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Chicago.

The invitation was sent through official channels last fall. It was repeated several times during the intervening months.

The puzzle comes from the reply finally received on April 7. This letter, in Russian, from the Academy of Medical Sciences of the U.S.S.R. stated:

"Soviet psychiatry cannot accept a part in the conference."

Dr. Iago Galdston of New York, chairman of the conference and the man who carried on the correspondence inviting the Soviet psychiatrists, said the answer was both puzzling and frustrating.

He could not explain the answer, unless it meant "bungling" on the part of some "underling" who did not understand what it was all about. The signature of the Soviet letter was not legible enough to identify who actually had written and signed it.

Science News Letter, May 12, 1956

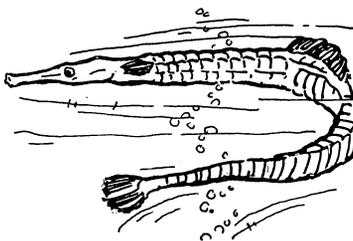
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The Peculiar Pipefish

➤ THROUGH EVOLUTION, living creatures adapt closely to their environment. As in the case of the polar bear, with his coat of white that blends with the icy waste he inhabits, this adaptation is obvious.

However, how and why some creatures display differences in their bodies as their surroundings change is harder to understand.

For instance, E. B. Joseph of the Oceanographic Institute of Florida State University was given a collection of pipefish, *Syngnathus scovelli*, taken on the Mexican coast. He noticed that the snouts of those collected in Laguna Madre were very short,

ANTHROPOLOGY

Single Race for Iraq

➤ THE MESOPOTAMIAN PORTION of what is now Iraq has been inhabited for many centuries by people of a single or very similar racial type. The type, known to scientists as Mediterranean, is still dominant in the region today.

It was a land of long-heads, Dr. Daris Ray Swindler of the University Museum, Philadelphia, concludes on the basis of a study of skeletons from Nippur, the oldest dating back to 900 years before Christ. The people during the whole time were white, with no evidence whatever of either Negroid or Mongoloid characters.

The great equalizer that kept the race in Mesopotamia free from mixture is likely to have been the polluted water of the Euphrates River. Foreigners who happened to come to its shores could not survive.

Another strong influence of physical geography on the people of ancient Mesopotamia was observed in the teeth. Like the teeth of ancient skulls found previously at neighboring Ur and Ubaid, the teeth from Nippur examined by Dr. Swindler showed signs of an amazing amount of wear.

One man had worn down his lower first molars to the roots so that he was actually using the roots of his teeth to chew his bread.

while pipefish from Laguna de Tamiahua had comparatively long snouts. Why the difference?

From his experience with this species of pipefish up and down the Florida coast and from Florida rivers, Mr. Joseph thought he knew a reason for the difference. He wrote to the collector of the pipefishes, asking for the degree of saltiness of the lagoons where the fish were taken, adding that it was his bet that Laguna Madre was very salty, while Tamiahua was probably only brackish.

The marine biologist was right. When the answer to his question came back, he found that Laguna Madre was indeed very salty—100 parts of salt in every 1,000 parts of water. Normal sea water contains only about 30 parts of salt per 1,000 parts of water. Water from Laguna de Tamiahua proved to be only about 15 parts salt per 1,000.

Thus, it appears that there is a connection between the length of snout of this pipefish and the saltiness of the water it lives in: the saltier the water, the shorter the snout.

Mr. Joseph's observations on pipefishes in Florida had given him this idea, and being able to guess the saltiness of the Mexican waters from snout length would seem to prove the point. But why snout length and saltiness of water should be related is anybody's guess right now.

The pipefishes are close relatives of the seahorses, and like seahorses, the male pipefishes, not the females, carry the eggs until they hatch.

Science News Letter, May 12, 1956

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