you are interested in him and want to do what is best for him. Sometimes it is possible for individuals to get along with relatives with a minimum of friction provided they are not thrown into constant daily contact with them.

9. Avoid over-solicitousness. Don't make an invalid of the returning soldier. Work is the most healing medicine for sick spirits. Let him take part in the work of the home and the community. He wants to do this. Particularly does he want a part in war work. He is out of the Army but he is still in the fight. Make good use of his services.

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ORNITHOLOGY

Owls Hatch From Eggs Days and Weeks Apart

See Front Cover

➤ BARN OWLS lay their eggs at intervals so that eggs and young of wholly different sizes may be found in the same nest. George A. Smith, of Quarryville, Pa., who took the photograph on the cover of this SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, says there were six young owls in the nest pictured. The youngest one, at the foot of the owl to the right, was less than a day old. The wide-eyed fellow at the left was several weeks old.

Barn owls are always hungry, eating their own weight in food every night, and more if they can get it. Like hawks, owls tear their prey apart and swallow the pieces whole. The flesh is digested and the bones, fur, feathers and other indigestible parts are formed into compact pellets which are regurgitated.

The usefulness of these birds in the destruction of rodents is evident from inspections of the disgorged pellets. Dr. Alexander Wetmore of the U. S. National Museum examined 1,247 pellets of barn owls that lived in a tower of the Smithsonian Institution Building in Washington, D. C. In these he found the skulls and other bones of 1,987 field mice, 656 house mice, 210 rats, 92 sparrows and blackbirds, and 4 frogs.

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One *bad apple* in a box often hastens the spoilage of all because the decaying fruit gives off ethylene gas.

Electronically cleaned air in dwellings is a future possibility; high-voltage rectifiers create electrostatic attraction which takes all dust, dirt, ashes and pollen grains out of the air.

GENERAL SCIENCE

"Living Package" of Home And Surroundings Urged

➤ A "LIVING PACKAGE," a complete package for living with ample land and trees and a structure that gives maximum protection from the elements at minimum maintenance, was visualized as a post-war housing goal by Irving W. Clark, manager of better homes department of Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company, speaking before the American Ceramic Society in Pittsburgh.

"The full realization of this huge post-war housing program will require large volumes of permanent public works such as streets, water systems and playgrounds as well as commercial and public buildings," he said.

"Representatives of the industry should take an active part in the post-war planning of these community activities to assure such projects getting through the blueprint, specification and finance stages."

The immediate post-war housing pro-

gram, he said, should develop on a schedule calling for 350,000 to 400,000 units the first year and reaching 1,000,000 units annually by the end of the fifth year.

He asserted that these post-war housing figures "are reasonable and are within the ability of the housing industry to accomplish and the public to absorb."

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This Week's Books

THE BACONIAN LECTURES 1943—*Univ. of Iowa,* 120 p., paper, 75c. Series on Aims and Progress of Research No. 74, Study Series No. 405.

BEHIND THE OPEN DOOR: The Story of American Far Eastern Relations—Foster Rhea Dulles—*Institute of Pacific Relations and Webster,* 92 p., illus,. paper, 40c.

THE BRUSH FOUNDATION STUDY OF CHILD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: I. Psychometric Tests—Elizabeth Ebert and Katherine Simmons—*Society for Research in Child Development,* 113 p., paper, $1.50.

CALCULUS REFRESHER FOR TECHNICAL MEN—A. Albert Klaf—*Whittlesey House,* 431 p., $3.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF HOLLAND TO THE SCIENCES—A. J. Barnouw, B. Landheer, eds.—*Querido,* 373 p., illus., $3.50.

CERAMIC STRATIGRAPHY AT CERRO DE LAS MESAS VERACRUZ, MEXICO (Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 141)—Philip Drucker—*Gov't. Printing Off.,* 155 p., illus., paper, 50c.

DR. GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER, Scientist—Shirley Graham and George D. Lipscomb—*Messner,* 248 p., illus., $2.50.

ELEMENTARY TOPOGRAPHY AND MAP READING—Samuel L. Greitzer—*McGraw-Hill,* 157 p., illus., $1.60.

GEOLOGY FOR EVERYMAN—Sir Albert Charles Seward—*Cambridge Univ. Press,* 312 p., illus., $3.25. This book is not only good as a first approach to geology but is useful for reference purposes despite its British flavor.

A GUIDE TO NAVAL AVIATION—Wallace W. Elton, Alfred H. Driscoll, Robert N. Burchmore, Gray B. Larkum—*McGraw-Hill,* 296 p., illus., $2.50.

IT'S YOUR FUTURE: Make the Most of It!—Martin Panzer—*Whittlesey House,* 270 p., $2.50. A breezy "success" book.

LET'S ALL GROW VEGETABLES—Grace Keen and Arthur Hutchins—*Univ. of Minn. Press,* 92 p., illus., paper, $1.

THE MUTANTS OF DROSOPHILA MELANOGASTER—Calvin B. Bridges and Katherine S. Brehme—*Carnegie Institution,* 257 p., illus., paper: $2:50, cloth: $3, Publication No. 552.

PHYSICS WORKBOOK—Mahlon H. Buell and Frederick W. Schuler—*Lippincott,* 378 p., illus., paper, $1.12, rev. ed.

STICK AND RUDDER; An Explanation of the Art of Flying—Wolfgang Langewiesche—*Whittlesey House,* 389 p., illus., $3.75.

WINGS AFTER WAR: The Prospects of Post-War Aviation—S. Paul Johnston—*Duell, Sloan & Pearce,* 129 p., illus., $2.

WAR-TIME CHINA—Maxwell S. Stewart—Am. Council Inst. of Pacific Relations, 63 p., illus., paper, 25c., I.P.R. Pamphlets No. 10.

BOTANY

NATURE RAMBLINGS by Frank Thone

Wandering Weeds

➤ AMERICAN fighting men who have time to look about themselves in quieter sectors of the Pacific islands may be surprised to find, among the lush, exotic vegetation, many leaves and flowers and fruits that remind them of home. They will most often be weeds, sometimes of the very same species they have had to pull out of their gardens or fight in the fields back on the farm.

In the War Department's official manual of emergency food plants and poisonous plants of the Pacific islands (TM 10-420), the following are listed among species that may be pressed into service to enable grounded flyers and "bushed" soldiers to live off the country, if need be: ground cherry, black nightshade, water chestnut, dayflower, seaside morning-glory and purslane—the latter more likely to be called "pusley" by fighters who were farmers a couple of years ago.

Because they knew them at home, and now find them in these far islands, our men overseas may take them all to be American in origin. This is not necessarily the case. Some of them were immigrants into America, too, and their presence in the islands may be the result of further travel from our continent or of independent travel from other lands where they are equally at home. This will certainly be the case, for example, with the water hyacinth, familiar to everyone from the Gulf Coast and peninsular Florida, which was a far-traveled weed before ever it reached our shores.

How did they get there? Well, weeds are great travelers, and seem to have pretty much the same abilities as stowaways on the white man's ships as his universal though unwanted animal fellow-voyagers, the rat, the cockroach and the housefly. It's pretty hard to tell just how.

Seeds of some, probably, were brought in earth and gravel used as ballast in ships. Such ballast is usually shoveled up from dumps and waste places—natural habitats for weeds. Some of the species definitely belong to the seashore, which gives further support to this theory.

Somewhat more direct, though still inadvertent, may have been the human role in furnishing transportation to these vegetable wanderers. The South Sea Islands have been favorite scenes of American missionary endeavor from the very early days of the republic. American traders, too, have been frequent visitors at many of the islands, and on some of them Americans have settled as planters. Garden seeds imported from home may have had weed seeds mixed with them; hay and straw used as packing in boxes and barrels of household gear or trade goods notoriously carry weed seeds.

A few species are plants once cultivated but now "gone native" and relapsed to a more primitive, weedy habit of growth. Among these, beyond all possibility of question, are several definitely South American plants, such as tomato, lima bean, sweet potato, peanut and cassava, or manioc.

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INVENTION

Novel Air Fence Uses Balloons Within Balloons

➤ A NOVEL air fence, subject of patent 2,345,550 granted to Alex Berman of Louisville, Ky., is intended to entangle enemy dive bombers and other aircraft attacking a city, building, camp or ship. The fence is made up of encircling balloons from which dangle wires and chains. Each balloon is held at a fixed height by a cable attached to an anchored winch on the ground by which it can be pulled down to the earth.

Each of these balloons, in reality, is an envelope containing a number of small attached balloons so that if some are punctured by bullets the others will hold the main balloon and its dangling chains aloft. The hanging chains are suspended from the two ends of a strap extending over the balloon so that the whole is effectively stabilized.

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