

Insect Hunting on Ocean

Entomology

Steamship travellers with time hanging heavy upon their hands at various ports of call can aid entomology by becoming insect collectors, Dr. T. D. A. Cockerell, of the University of Colorado, has just suggested in a communication to the English scientific journal, *Nature*.

Professor Cockerell recently made a trip around the world. He noticed that the bright lights of ships at anchor enticed insects from the shore and made them fly out to the ship. Taking advantage of these insect visits, he was able to make collections from ports and countries at which he was unable to visit.

Ships probably play an important part in the spread of insects throughout the world, Professor Cockerell suggested. He urged travellers to collect insects that they observe coming aboard ships. For beetles, for instance, the voyager need only preserve them in a small bottle of alcohol.

"A more ambitious but interesting project," said Professor Cockerell, "would be to take out a small vessel with a bright light and determine just how far from the shore insects of different kinds can be attracted."

Science News-Letter, May 11, 1929

Electricity and Railroads

Engineering

The thoroughgoing analysis of transportation problems, which has occupied so much attention for the past few years, established the fact that conditions in terminals and yards are the greatest stumbling block to the rapid and inexpensive movement of freight, which is so necessary to the economic operation of the railroads. As a result, much time, money and ingenuity have been expended by the railroads to improve these conditions wherever possible, so as to increase the facilities for clearing freight.

One improvement that naturally suggested itself was that of lighting the yards by some method that would permit work to be carried on at night with the same speed and safety as during daylight hours. The modern floodlighting projector has made this possible, as shown on our cover.

The picture is from a painting made by Walter L. Greene for the General Electric Co., through whose courtesy it is reproduced.

Science News-Letter, May 11, 1929

Are Farmers Dying Out?

Genetics

While Congress is trying to form a law to help the farmers, a biological law is working in such a way that there soon will be no more farmers to be helped. At that time or shortly after, our civilization will collapse. This will come as the result of the urbanization of the best of the human farm stock, prophesies O. F. Cook, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, in the *Journal of Genetics*.

The brightest farm boys and girls, the most capable farm families, are being drawn to the cities, with apparent advantage both to themselves and the cities. However, in the cities small families are the rule, living is hard and competition is fierce. Farm families that move there die out quickly. Meanwhile the supply on the farms is constantly growing smaller and less promising.

"In the continued drafting of the

more capable elements from the farm to the cities," Mr. Cook sees "a process of adverse selection which has the power to destroy our civilization like others of the past."

Any steps toward farm relief that do not take into account the biological factors involved stand little chance of succeeding. It is these factors that must largely determine the future of the nation and the race, Mr. Cook declared.

"Liberty enlightened the world from America because life was lived most constructively in American farm homes," Mr. Cook said. "The Colonial and pioneer periods developed essential human values which are in danger of being lost through urbanism. Without the constructive life and discipline of the farm homes, our democratic institutions are at stake."

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