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## Life in a Drop of Water

(Continued from p. 134)

holes through which the animal pushes pseudopods, or false feet, in order to capture its food.

As the Foraminifera die, their shells drop to the bottom of the ocean, forming a thick grey mud called the globigerina ooze which covers about 30% of the Atlantic Ocean floor.

The soft, single-celled Radiolaria construct beautiful fragile structures of natural glass from the silicon dissolved in seawater. These ocean dwellers sink slowly to the bottom of the sea, forming the radiolarian ooze that covers about three million square miles in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Another group of one-celled creatures, called the Sporozoans, or spore-formers, reproduces by means of spores.

Perhaps the most hated Sporozoans are the malarial parasites. The microscopic malarial pest enters the bloodstream of man by the bite of an infected *Anopheles* mosquito. Once inside the red blood cells of a human being, it undergoes sporulation to form more of the parasites, which spread throughout the body of the victim.

Thus live the complex microscopic organisms, each with a life of its own, forming tiny worlds of great beauty or creating some of man's most deadly diseases.

• Science News Letter, 89:134 February 26, 1966

## Nature Note

### The Stinging Scorpion

➤ A FIERCE SCORPION can look its foe in the eye while it flips its tail up over its back and stings that enemy with a curved stinger.

The poison injected from the sharp hook can inflict a wound severe enough to quell the struggles of a spider or insect, or it can kill the adversary. Even larger animals have succumbed to this poisonous creature, and many human deaths have been attributed to the scorpion.

These creatures belong to the largest group of animals without backbones, or invertebrates, and are of phylum Arthropoda, which means jointed feet. Scorpions are relatives of spiders, ticks and mites, and all are in the Arachnida class.

Scorpions vary in size from the shining black eight-inch species that inhabit the tropical jungles to the thin pale, one-inch fellows that prefer to live in sandy or desert areas. They all have the same basic body shape—eight legs, two lobster-like pincher claws, and a jointed tail that flicks up over their backs when they are angry or alarmed.

About 400 species are known in the tropical and temperate zones of the world, many of which are found in southern Europe and northern Africa.

Of the 35 species inhabiting the United States, most are in the West and Southwest.

• Science News Letter, 89:142 February 26, 1966



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