The Track of a Flat Solid falling through Water.

By using a small crystal of silver nitrate as the "flat solid" and acidulating the water with HCl the track becomes visible, as seen in the reproduction (Fig. 1).

FIG. 1.

It was by no means easy to "catch" the effect, and I have to thank two members of the Chemical Society of this College, G. R. Ellis and C. P. Sayles, for all the patience and care taken in obtaining so successful a result.

E. W. WETHERELL.
Liverpool College, Liverpool.

Water Snails and Liver Flukes.

DR. MONICA TAYLOR states in NATURE of November 25, p. 701, that further inquiry is desirable in respect to the intermediate hosts of the fluke, as in some districts where water snails are rare or altogether absent, yet in these districts sheep are subject to liver-rot disease. May I add another point? In the Swansea valley, county of Glamorgan, farmers state very definitely, as the result of years of experience, that liming the land increases the liver fluke, for sheep can be run on the rough pastures in the area with slight loss from liver-rot disease, before it is limed; but after it has been so treated the loss from liver-rot disease becomes heavy, sometimes serious. Theories regarding this are many and varied, but the fact remains that the loss from liver-rot in any given area of land is definitely increased after liming. Does liming a wet sour pasture make it more congenial to the water snail? R. HEDGER WALLACE.

November 28, 1922.

The Cause of Anticyclones.

THE steady and persistently high barometric pressure that has prevailed over southern England during most of the autumn naturally causes the desire to know how an anticyclone is produced and maintained in such a situation, but the explanations current in meteorological literature are not for the most part efficacious. It is commonly stated that the high pressure is due to a mass of cold and therefore heavy air above it, but for Europe at least this is in direct opposition to observational results, which show that some three-quarters of the whole mass of air over an anticyclonic area is unduly warm. It is the mass of air over the area that is important; its temperature is quite immaterial, and the real difficulty is to explain why the excess of air does not roll off.

A lecturer demonstrating the gaseous laws must provide himself with a closed vessel in which to confine his gas, and if by any means he spills a pound of mercury on his table he will not expect to find it there in a convenient heap the next day or the next week. The meteorologist, on the other hand, having provided his "polar" air does not proceed to explain why it remains *in situ* and does not rather follow the ordinary law of a fluid finding its own level. The difficulty should be faced and not ignored. Doubtless the equivalent of the lecturer's closed vessel is the geostrophic wind surrounding the anticyclone, but one would like to know how the wind is produced and why and how it is maintained.

W. H. DINES.

Benson, Wallingford, December 1.

German Book Prices.

THERE has been much comment recently in England and America on the above subject: see particularly an article by Prof. Noyes (*J. Ind. Eng. Chem.*, 1922, 99), and editorial comments in the same journal, 1922, 475.

The following prices are examples:

	Beilstein, bound.				Stelzner, unbound.		
	Vol. 1.	Vol. 2.	Vol. 3.	Vol. 4.	Vol. 1.	Vol. 2.	Vol. 3.
England, shillings .	40	38	102	110	24	38	100
Germany, marks .	110	110	280	330	70	104	325

The prices charged to members of the German Chemical Society seem so peculiar that I recently wrote to the society pointing out that much dissatisfaction had been expressed at this state of affairs, and received an answer, from which, as it is too long to insert in full, the following curious passages have been extracted: "... Reckoned on the number of pages the prices are much smaller than those of the publications of almost all foreign chemical societies. *The justice of our fixed prices was confirmed a few days ago from Switzerland.* [The italics are mine.] There can be no thought of making foreign and German prices equal so long as we Germans are compelled to spend unnumbered thousands of our depreciated marks to obtain English books . . ."

It is amusing to note the proud reference to the bulk of the journal, which enhances its value so much in German eyes. The diffuseness of their publications is considered in most countries to be a disadvantage; recent complaints were about the quality, not quantity. As to the remark about Germans having to spend many marks to purchase foreign books, the obvious comment is that they need not have printed such a lot of paper money.

Was there not an article in the Treaty of Versailles by which Germany undertook not to impose on British subjects any other or any higher direct or indirect fees, dues, or tax, than are imposed on German citizens?

In the circumstances, I am sure most chemists will agree that until treaties with Germany are something more than scraps of paper, money expended in subscriptions to the German Chemical Society is not much better spent than in buying paper marks.

It is to be hoped that the English and American Chemical Societies will soon be in a position to publish a Dictionary of Organic Chemistry at a fixed reasonable price and in a reasonably terse language.

K. C. BROWNING.

16 Bridge Avenue Mansions,
Hammersmith, W.6, December 1.

Medical Education.

IN NATURE for December 9, p. 769, Sir Archdall Reid asks the following question: "But can any one tell us of what utility, practical or intellectual, is the biology which medical students learn—facts about the classification of plants, the vascular system of the sea urchin, the digestive system of the leech, the bones in the cod's head, and so on?"

I am not quite clear whether this question has been propounded to invite answers, or to introduce another of Sir Archdall Reid's favourite discussions on mutations and fluctuations, etc. There is, however, scarcely any need to answer the question. So far as I am aware, the biology offered to medical students to-day is very different from that suggested by Sir Archdall Reid in the lines from his letter quoted above.

W. J. DAKIN.

Zoology Department, University of Liverpool,
December 11.