

HeLa

SIR,—I was pleased to read J. Douglas's question, "Who was HeLa?" (*Nature*, 242, 144; 1973).

I came across a poem by Nancy L. Caroline called "To Helen Larson" (*Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 15, 1971). It ends:—

Then Helen Larson wed. Her groom
Was cancer. Soon she felt
Death stirring deep within her womb.
She never tried to be immortal. She
died
Respectably but in her dying
Quite untied the knot of sex and death
Her breath ceased
In the tomb
Unmindful that her womb persisted
separately.
To multiply is to divide
Spawning immortality.

Yours faithfully,

P. P. GIORGI

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Sense on Pollution

SIR,—Bearing in mind your obviously very deeply felt and persistent opposition to all things environmental, I suppose one must excuse the inaccuracy of the underestimate of current public concern about the environment implicit in your editorial "Measured Sense on Pollution" (*Nature*, 241, 489; 1973). What is much less excusable, however, is your assertion that "it has long since become apparent that British government depart-

ments are well equipped to take environmental problems in their stride". Since I find it impossible to believe that you could be so naive as seriously to consider that the British government and its civil servants, highly competent and widely experienced though they indubitably are, are presently equipped to cope with the manifold current and future environmental problems associated with population growth, increasing usage of dwindling natural resources, pollution and the need for adequate food production, I am bound to deplore the cynicism of your statement.

I am inclined to suspect that your ostensible claim that the bureaucrats will see us through, come hell or high (dirty) water, is in reality a restatement of the irresponsible and untenable view that, no matter what problems science and technology confront us with, technology and science will come up with a solution, the problematical side-effects of which will be solved by science and technology . . .

Yours faithfully,

PETER FERDINANDO

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Romford,
Essex

Announcements

International Meetings

April 4, **Third Weizmann Institute Lecture on "Membranes, Natural and Man-made"** (Weizmann Institute Foundation, Rex House, 4/12 Regent Street, London SW1).

April 15–19, **Third Conference on Recent Advances in Bio-Medical Engineering** (John D. Gasking, Dept of Pharmacology, The Medical College, St Bartholomew's Hospital, Charterhouse Square, London EC1).

Erratum

IN the News and Views article "Infection in Pregnancy and Foetal Growth" (*Nature*, 241, 425; 1973) our correspondent regrets that the work of Coid and Ramsden (on page 460 of that issue) was incorrectly quoted. The last sentence in the first column should read "The ratio of serum albumin to $\alpha 1$ foetoprotein was lower in the newborn mice which were growth retarded . . .".

Reports and Publications

not included in the Monthly Books Supplement

Great Britain and Ireland

Scientific Proceedings of the Royal Dublin Society, Series A. Vol. 4, No. 22: An Altitudinal Sequence of Soils in the Sutton-Howth Area of Co. Dublin. By B. O'Flynn and J. F. Collins. Pp. 315–330. 50p. Vol. 4, No. 23: The Life Cycles of Some Invertebrates in an Isothermic Stream in Western Ireland. By Edward Fahy. Pp. 331–342+plate 14. 50p. Vol. 4, No. 24: Palaeomagnetic Results from Irish Carboniferous and Triassic Rocks. By F. G. Mulder. Pp. 343–350. 50p. Vol. 4, No. 25: Growth Trends of Zircons from the Northern Part of the Leinster Granites. By L. N. Gupta. Pp. 351–370. 50p. Series B. Vol. 3, No. 10: Observations of Some Fusarium Populations in Co. Donegal Cat Soils. By M. J. Downes. Pp. 127–136. 30p. Vol. 3, No. 11: The Reclamation of Mountain Soils and Attendant Profile and Land-Use Changes. By Michael J. Conry. Pp. 137–158+plate 2. 75p. (Dublin: Royal Dublin Society, 1972.) [241]

University of Oxford. Schedules of Lectures Authorized by Boards of Faculties, Hilary Term 1973. (Lecture Lists Supplement (2) to *Oxford University Gazette*, Volume CIII.) (Oxford: The University, 1973.) 20p. [241]

Radiopharmaceuticals and Clinical Radiation Sources, 1973/4. Pp. 91. (Amersham: The Radiochemical Centre, 1973.) [261]

National Survey of Air Pollution, 1961–71. Vol. 2: South West Region; Wales Region; North West Region. (Warren Spring Laboratory, Department of Trade and Industry.) Pp. viii+198. (London: HMSO, 1972.) £3.50 net. [261]

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