— Decatur, Ill., or rather a suburb of that town, is the latest place from which cases of food-poisoning are reported. This time it is chicken-salad which has produced the evil results. At a recent wedding-party, at which this dish formed a part of the entertainment, fifty persons were poisoned, but not fatally in any single instance. The illness is attributed to the copper from a copper kettle in which the chickens were cooked and salted.

— The J. Marion Sims memorial fund now amounts to $7,759.91. The committee who have the fund in charge are about to take steps to erect a suitable bronze monument to the memory of the distinguished American surgeon.

— Sir Joseph Lister, the great exponent of the antiseptic treatment of wounds which is known as Listerism, has abandoned the use of the spray of carbolic acid which he formerly advocated so persistently, on the ground that his later experiments satisfy him that the germicide properties of a solution of 1 to 40 of carbolic acid thrown by a spray several feet into the air are absolutely nothing; and that the success obtained by this treatment was due to irrigation and cleanliness. He now employs sal alembroth as a dressing for wounds. This is a salt which was known to the ancient alchemists, and is a double mercurial salt formed by the sublimation of a mixture of perchloride of mercury and chloride of ammonium. Lister employs this in a solution of 1-1000, soaking in it his dressings of gauze and lint.

— The English commission for the investigation of hydrophobia is thoroughly organized and equipped for that purpose, but has as yet been unable to take any original steps in that direction, by reason of its total lack of material, no dog having become rabid since its organization.

— From the *Courier record of medicine*, we learn that a case of hydrophobia recently occurred at Fort Worth, Tex. After the child was bitten, he was taken to Fort Denton, where a mad-stone was applied, for which the parents paid twenty-five dollars. Hearing of another mad-stone, and desiring to do every thing in their power to save their child, his parents secured this one at a cost of fifty dollars, and applied it. Within a short time the child developed hydrophobia, and died.

— We regret to note the death of Prof. H. A. Bayne, Ph.D., of the Royal military college, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Dr. Bayne was a native of Nova Scotia. After graduating in arts at Dalhousie college, Halifax, N.S., he spent five years in the special study of chemistry under Wiedemann at Leipzig, Bunsen at Heidelberg, and Dumas at Paris, and took his doctor's degree at Heidelberg. Returning to his native land, he first engaged in organizing the scientific department of the Halifax high school, assisting the faculty of Dalhousie college at the same time to start a science course. In 1879 he was appointed professor of chemistry in the Royal military college, then just founded. Since his appointment his time has been largely occupied with the organizing of his department, and only during the last year or so has he been able to find time for original research. At the last meeting of the Royal society of Canada, of which he was a fellow, he read a valuable paper on 'Chemical tests of the purity of silk.' He had begun in Germany a series of experiments on the properties of the rarer metals, and hoped to continue them when leisure came; but with leisure has come disease and death.

— In a letter to the *Beacon*, Mr. E. B. Elliott corrects an error made in *Science* for Sept. 3. In that number, p. 219, sixth line, 287.372 should read 287.03.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

***Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.*

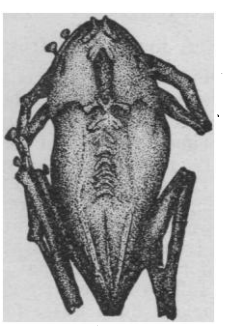
A mummified frog.

NOT long ago Mr. James Stevenson of the U. S. geological survey visited me for a day or two at Fort Wingate, and while here invited my attention to an interesting specimen that had fallen into his possession during a recent trip he had made in the coal regions of northern Pennsylvania. The specimen consists of a mummified frog taken from the coal-mine of McLean county, Penn., and the following account of it is from a local newspaper loaned me by Mr. Stevenson for the present purpose. I quote the short notice in full; and the writer of it says, "One of the most curious finds unearthed lately in this region, and what may yet prove a valuable fact in the study of science and history, was singularly found by Eddie Marsh, the fourteen-year-old son of Mr. D. B. Marsh, a book-keeper for Stevenson Brothers, hardware dealers. Eddie, becoming impatient at the fire in the stove, which was not burning vigorously, took the poker and began punching it. A large lump of coal lay smouldering, and he determined to break it; and, after punching at it for a moment, the lump burst open as if by explosion, and a number of pieces flew out of the stove. One piece he caught, and he was in the act of casting it back into the stove, when its lightness attracted his attention. On viewing it, he saw that it was nothing less than a perfectly formed frog. On last evening a large number of persons viewed the little curiosity. It had been embedded in the centre of the large lump of coal, and its bed was plainly discernible when the lump was laid open. The lump of coal came from the third vein of coal in the McLean county coal-shaft, which is 541 feet under ground. The curiosity apparently was not petrified. Apparently it had been mummified instead. It was shrivelled until it is about half the size of a full-grown frog, and it is light and soft. Its shape is perfect, and the warty

protuberances of the skin are very plain. Its limbs are regular and properly shaped, including the finger-like toe of its feet, and its eyes and mouth are natural. There can be no doubt of its being a mummified frog, and now various and tough questions arise regarding it: How did it get that far under ground? How did it become embedded in that chunk of coal, which probably had been blasted from the centre of a thick vein? How many thousands of years had it been buried? and various other queries, which we will leave for the scientist to unravel and explain."

Mr. Stevenson tells me that he is personally acquainted with all the parties concerned in the discovery of this specimen, and has carefully examined the piece of coal whence the mummy was taken, and says, further, that it came from the vault, and not from either the sides or the floor of the mine.

He has done me the honor to turn the specimen over to me for diagnosis, as well as to take such steps as I saw fit to ascertain if there be any similar cases on record, and, finally, how geologists or paleontologists explain such finds as this. The specimen is now before me, and I at once recognized it as a species of Hyla, though I am unable to say which one. It apparently agrees in all its external characters with a specimen I have of Hyla versicolor, kindly diagnosed for me by Professor Cope last summer, though it is rather smaller. As will be seen



from the life-size figure I have made of it, which illustrates this letter, it is in nearly a natural position; its feet, however, are somewhat drawn up under it. I have figured it as viewed directly from above. It is completely mummified, and in a wonderfully perfect state of preservation, being of a dark, snuff-brown color, somewhat shrunken, and, in short, reduced to a condition, that, if properly excluded from the air, would keep for an indefinite length of time. I am aware that these tree-frogs very often climb into some of the most unheard-of places; but it struck me that it would be interesting to have some one tell us if they ever heard of a Hyla finding its way to the vault of a coal-mine 541 feet under ground, and climbing into the solid coal-bed after getting there.

R. W. SHUFELDT.

Fort Wingate, N. Mex., Sept. 14.

The source of the Mississippi.

A correspondent in the number of *Science* for Aug. 13 contributes an article on Captain Glazier's claim to have discovered the true source of the Mississippi. The writer commences by quoting *Science* of May 15, 1885, in which it is stated that Glazier gave his own name to the lake he discovered. This is an error invented by some official jealous that any man not in the employment of the government should presume to make a discovery falling within the range of the government survey. In the Brainerd *Tribune* of Aug. 14, 1881, occurs the following, from the pen of one of Captain Glazier's companions, a gentleman, it is to be presumed, of veracity. It may be premised that Brainerd is the nearest point to the source of the Mississippi that can boast of a newspaper. The writer says, after describing the ascent to the newly discovered lake through the stream that unites it with Lake Itasca, "On its one promontory our party landed after exploring its shores; and, after slaking our thirst at a spring of ice-cold water which bubbled up near by, the little party was marshalled in line, and Captain Glazier made a few remarks appropriate to the discovery of the true source of the Father of waters. After this, six volleys were fired in honor of the occasion, and then the question of a name for the new lake arose. *This being left for the captain's companions to decide*, Mr. Barrett Channing Paine, after alluding in warm terms to the time, money, and energy expended by Captain Glazier in this expedition, *proposed that it be named 'Lake Glazier'* in his honor. This proposition was received with applause, and carried by acclamation." Thus, we see, Captain Glazier did not 'give his own name' to the lake. He, on the contrary, suggested that it should retain its Indian appellation of 'Pokegama.'

There is nothing to be found in Schoolcraft's narrative to show that he penetrated south of Itasca. He speaks of an inlet to Lake Itasca leading from a smaller lake to the south, but clearly did not visit that smaller lake, and hence did not 'discover' it. Nor was it known to exist by Mr. Nicollet, who came after him. The latter explorer states that there are five creeks falling into Itasca. Captain Glazier discovered six, the sixth originating in a lake (not a lakelet) about five miles to the south of Itasca. This lake was not known to Nicollet. It lies nearly due south of the western arm of Itasca. He visited the others (which are mere ponds), but missed the most important one, probably owing to difficulty of access, the soil around it and for some distance from it being extremely swampy, and its inlet to Lake Itasca completely hidden by the densest vegetation. Such an inlet could not have been known to exist, except from the information of the Indian whose hunting-ground was in the immediate neighborhood. The 'infant Mississippi' flows from this lake, unknown until Captain Glazier forced his way into it in 1881, under the guidance of Chenowagesic. The lakelets or ponds shown on Nicollet's map have nothing to do with the source of the river; and the map itself, so far as Lake Itasca and its region are concerned, is altogether misleading. Itasca has three arms or bays, not two, as shown on Nicollet's map. The 'small lake south of and tributary to Lake Itasca' was not the lake discovered by the Glazier party; the lakes (or ponds) 'fully explored and mapped by Nicollet' did not include the Glazier Lake; and those 'surveyed, mapped, and named by the land office prior to 1879' were mere lakelets or ponds, all of them taken together considerably less in volume than the one discovered by Glazier. Your correspondent indulges in a glaring *petitio principii* in the paragraph from which the above quotations are made.