

## UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS.

MRS. E. B. COXE has given Lehigh University \$20,000 as a fund in memory of her husband, Eckley B. Coxe, the income of which is to be used for the support of poor and deserving students.

COLORADO COLLEGE has been given \$10,000 by an anonymous donor to be used for a building for women students.

THE Massachusetts Institute of Technology receives, by the will of the late William Tappen, Jr., Milton, Mass., \$10,000 to be used for deserving students, and is further made the residuary legatee of the estate.

THE will of the late Rev. Caleb Bradley, of Dedham, Mass., gives \$2,000 to Tufts College and \$2,000 to Gales College.

DR. E. FISCHER has been promoted to a full professorship of botany in the University at Berne, and has been made Director of the Botanical Gardens. Dr. Gustav Jäger, docent in the University of Vienna, has been appointed to an assistant professorship of theoretical physics, and Dr. Friedrich Gräfe, docent in the Polytechnic Institute at Darmstadt, to an assistant professorship of mathematics.

MR. A. FRANCIS DIXON has been appointed professor of anatomy in the University College of South Wales. It appears that the method of election was for three selected candidates to appear before the Council, one to be chosen by that body.

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

## ON SUPPOSED EFFECTS OF STRAIN IN TELESCOPIC OBJECTIVES.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In your issue of April 23d (page 656) I notice a criticism by Professor E. S. Holden, Director of the Lick Observatory, which seems to me to call for a word of comment. Professor Holden is inclined to discredit the observations of Mercury and Venus made by Mr. Percival Lowell and his assistants at Flagstaff, principally for the reason that they have not as yet been 'fully confirmed by other observers with other telescopes.' The markings seen by Mr. Lowell he attributes to

a supposed strain on the glass, induced by an overtight condition of the adjusting screws or of the objective in the cell.

Now it happens that I personally superintended the adjustment of the Lowell objective in the cell at Flagstaff before the observations in question were made, and I am satisfied that the screws holding the glass in place were *barely turned home with the fingers*. I desire to express it as my belief, founded on long experience as a practical optician, that strain in the glass is incapable of producing the effect of markings on a planetary disc. It is obvious that the same class of strain which exists in the Lowell must be present also in the Lick objective, since both are mounted precisely alike in their cells on triangular bearings; and if such effects were produced in the 24-inch glass as Professor Holden imagines they would be much more apparent in the 36-inch.

Having worked both of these objectives myself, and expended as much artistic ability on the one as on the other, there can be no impropriety in my saying that the performance of the Lowell glass is equal to that of the Lick or any of our large telescopes.

ALVAN G. CLARK.

CAMBRIDGEPORT, MASS.,  
May 1, 1897.

## THE LOESS FORMATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI REGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In reply to Professor J. E. Todd's letter in your issue of April 30th I wish to offer the following remarks:

A complete and satisfactory answer of the questions presented by Professor Todd would require a thorough discussion of the Loess formation; but the necessarily limited nature of this communication, and my own imperfect knowledge of the formation in its entirety, will admit only of my touching briefly upon a few points.

There is, in portions of the upper Mississippi region, particularly in that part of it with which I am best acquainted—northwestern Illinois, a silt deposit which is spread out over the very uneven uplands as an originally nearly uniform sheet, and whose relation to belts of comparatively thick typical loess along the