

In addition to its very full and illustrated description of various forms of platinum apparatus, it has notes on the care and cleaning of platinum ware, and a series of valuable tables which include the current required to fuse platinum wire of different sizes, weight of platinum wire of different sizes and foil of different thicknesses from 0.00045 to 0.1 inch, length of platinum wire per troy ounce, and many others. It is a useful book for the laboratory. The same firm has issued a little booklet—'Platinum: sources of supply, identification and separation of the ore; facts of interest to prospectors and miners.' It is printed in the hope of stimulating a search for platinum in mineral localities and increasing the American supply. From it we take the following: "There are few, if any, of the gold-bearing beds of the world that have failed to yield platinum, and it is more than likely that large quantities of platinum ore have been thrown away with the black sand washings from gold placer deposits." In the list of localities where platinum has been found we note a perpetuation of the old error which includes North Carolina. This, which was based upon a supposed single specimen, was several years ago shown by Professor F. C. Venable, of the University of North Carolina, to be a mistake. In view of the increasing use of platinum, the discovery of further pay deposits of platinum in this country would be of great value.

J. L. H.

#### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

DR. W. K. BROOKS, professor of zoology at the Johns Hopkins University, was presented with his portrait on the evening of March 25th, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his birth. The presentation was made at Professor Brooks' home at Brightside, by Professor W. H. Howell, in the presence of twenty-two of the subscribers. The painting by Mr. Thos. C. Corner is regarded as an excellent likeness.

A reproduction will be sent to each of the subscribers, who are for the most part former students of Professor Brooks, and include many of the leading zoologists of the United States. The committee which had the matter in charge consisted of Professor H. H. Donaldson, of the University of Chicago, chairman; Professors W. H. Howell and E. A. Andrews, of the Johns Hopkins University; Professor E. B. Wilson, of Columbia University; Professor H. V. Wilson, of the University of North Carolina; Professor S. Watasé, of the University of Chicago, and Professor T. H. Morgan, of Bryn Mawr College.

DR. TARLETON H. BEAN, Director of the New York Aquarium, has been asked to resign his office by the President of the Park Board. The conduct of the Aquarium under Dr. Bean has met with universal approval, and no reason is assigned for requesting his resignation. There is, in fact, probably none except the wish to secure an office with a salary of \$4,000 for an adherent of Tammany Hall.

MAYOR VAN WYCK, of New York, has refused to sanction an appropriation for preparing the site in Bryant Park for the New York Public Library, and there is reason to fear that the new building may be long delayed.

REFERENCE was made in this JOURNAL some eighteen months ago to a subscription to defray the cost of a portrait of Mr. Herbert Spencer to commemorate the completion of his 'Synthetic Philosophy.' The portrait has now been completed by Professor Herbert Herkomer and will be sent to the Royal Academy this year. During Mr. Spencer's life-time it will hang in the Tate Gallery; afterwards, with the approval of the trustees, it will find its permanent home in the National Portrait Gallery.

It is planned to secure a portrait of Lord Kelvin for the rooms of the Royal Society. Lord Kelvin was, it will be remembered, President of the Society from 1890 to 1895.

WE called attention, in the last issue of SCIENCE, to the memorial in memory of Buys Ballot, the eminent meteorologist. It may be added that Professor Willis L. Moore, Chief of the Weather Bureau, Washington; Dr. A. Lawrence Rotch, of Blue Hill Observatory,

and Mr. R. F. Stupart, Chief of the Weather Bureau, Toronto, are members of the National Committee, and subscriptions may be sent in their care.

PROFESSOR FELIX KLEIN has been presented, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his professorship, with an album containing photographs of the present and former members of the Göttingen Mathematical Society.

SIR HENRY BESSEMER, the eminent metallurgist and engineer, who died in London on March 15th, at the advanced age of eighty-five years, should be regarded as a man of science as well as a great inventor. It is interesting to remember that his process for converting cast iron into cast steel was first presented before the British Association in 1856. The essence of Sir Henry's process was simply to blow a blast of air through the molten metal until it was sufficiently decarbonized, and this has been said by a competent authority to be one of the five great inventions of the century. The reduction in the price of steel that has resulted has had an immense effect on modern civilization, it being needful only to refer to the use of steel rails and the consequent reduction in the cost of transportation and to the possibility of erecting buildings twenty stories high. Sir Henry Bessemer could not persuade any manufacturer to use his process and was compelled himself to show its value, fortunately making many million dollars as a result. Sir Henry Bessemer made many other inventions, and spent the last years of his life in devising a reflecting telescope.

THE death is announced of Professor Kirk, of New Zealand, the author of important works on the forests and flora of the colony, and of Dr. F. Hurter, a Liverpool chemist, who had made investigations in chemistry and physics, and of Dr. Jean Valentin, of Buenos Ayres, the geologist.

THE Senate of the University of Glasgow has resolved to confer the degree of LL.D. on Alexander Duncan, B.A., Secretary and Librarian to the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow; John Inglis, formerly President of

Marine Engineers, London; Dr. Elie van Rijkevorsel, of the Batavian Society of Experimental Philosophy, Rotterdam, and John Millar Thomson, F.R.S., Professor of Chemistry in King's College, London.

MR. ALEXANDER AGASSIZ gave a lecture in Saunders Theater, Harvard University, on March 24th, entitled 'The present state of theories of the formation of coral reefs,' giving an account of the important results of his recent investigations of the Fiji Islands.

THE Michigan Academy of Sciences holds its annual meeting at Ann Arbor on March 31st and April 1st and 2d. The address of the President, Professor V. M. Spaulding, was on a 'State Natural History Survey.' The Michigan Schoolmasters' Club holds its annual meeting at the same time and place, scientific subjects occupying a prominent place in the program.

At a recent meeting of the Boston Scientific Society officers were chosen for the ensuing year as follows: President, H. Helm Clayton; Vice-President, Otto B. Cole; Secretary, Frank A. Bates; Corresponding Secretary, John Ritchie, Jr., and Treasurer, S. N. Norton.

THE anthropological expedition from Cambridge University to Torres Straits, New Guinea and Borneo, to which we have already called attention, left England on March 10th, to be absent fifteen months. Very important results may be expected from the expedition, which is under the charge of Dr. A. C. Haddon, accompanied by six other men of science, peculiarly competent to investigate the natives—their physical characteristics, their mental condition, their folklore, their customs, their amusements, their songs, their language and their condition generally, as affected by their geographical environment.

IN addition to the plans of the Geological Survey for explorations in Alaska, the Treasury Department are about starting five or six expeditions to explore the Yukon river, Copper river and other water routes of the Territory, Congress having appropriated \$100,000 for the purpose.

REUTER'S Agency is informed that Mr. H. S.

the present, after consultation with the Foreign Office.

THE German Meteorological Society will meet at Frankfort-on-Main on April 14th-16th.

THE ninth General Congress of Teachers of the Blind will be held in Berlin on July 25th next. Further information can be obtained from Herr Matthies, Secretary of the Congress of Teachers of the Blind, Steglitz, near Berlin.

A CONGRESS of the Italian Medical Association of Hydrology and Climatology will be held at Parma on April 3d, 4th and 5th.

THE Trustees of the Philadelphia Museums will, at their next meeting, consider the question of establishing branch museums in the principal cities of the Union.

THE National Museum has received from Mr. J. O. Cates, of Port Townsend, Washington, a five-foot example of the remarkable ragfish, *Acrotus willoughbyi*, which was discovered and described in 1887. Another strange fish reported several years ago, but not preserved, was probably an *Acrotus*. The present example, although somewhat mutilated about the head, has been cast and is now preserved in alcohol. Illustrations of this and allied forms are to be seen in *Oceanic Ichthyology* by Goode & Bean, Pl. LXII.

It is reported that the German Government is considering the creation of a department of health under a responsible minister, replacing the present medical bureau under the Department of Public Instruction.

THERE is a bill at present before the New York Legislature providing that no patent medicine shall be sold or exposed for sale in the State, unless the formula is printed on the label of the bottle or package containing such medicine, and also on the outside wrapper.

THE Government of India has decided that it is unable to undertake the establishment of a physical laboratory.

M. PHILIPPE PLAUTAMOUR has bequeathed to the city of Geneva 300,000 francs and his estate of Sécheron, which it is expected will be used as a botanic garden.

GOVERNOR BLACK signed, on March 26th, the bill authorizing the establishment of a College

of Forestry at Cornell University and appropriating \$10,000 therefor. The Trustees of the University are authorized to purchase, with the consent of the State Forest Preserve Board, not more than thirty thousand acres of land in the State park in the Adirondacks for the purpose of establishing the proposed college. The faculty of the college will consist of a professor, two instructors, a forest manager and such rangers, superintendents and other subordinates as may be required. The college will be conducted so as to give instruction and experiment in the latest scientific forestry.

A BILL is before Congress appropriating \$25,000 for the purchase of land to be added to the National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C.

THE United States Senate has passed a bill for the protection of song birds, providing that the importation into the United States of birds, feathers or parts of birds for ornamental purposes be prohibited, and prohibiting the transportation or sale of such articles in any Territory of the United States or in the District of Columbia.

THE Prussian Minister of Agriculture, Baron von Hammerstein-Loxten, has issued an official report on the San José scale, setting forth that recently numbers have been found in all stages of development on apples. He adds that it must be presumed that German orchards and nurseries are already infected, and he calls for an immediate and general investigation of the reports and the results.

At the last meeting of the Council of the Royal College of Physicians, London, a petition was presented from members of the College resident in Italy, asking the support of the Council in protecting their interests as British practitioners in that country in view of the proposed legislation of the Italian Government enacting that qualified medical men of other countries shall not in future be allowed to practice in Italy without holding the degree of an Italian university. It was referred to the President and Vice-Presidents of the College to consider and report thereon.

THERE were 1,259 deaths from the plague during the week ending March 24th.

At the recent meeting of the Association of

the Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom at London a resolution was adopted declaring in favor of the compulsory adoption of the metric system of weights and measures within some limited period of time.

THE House Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures has reported favorably a resolution authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to make experiments to determine the best materials for minor coinage and to submit new designs for coins to Congress. It is claimed that the copper cent is undesirable, because it is easily corroded and that the five-cent nickel piece is too soft. It is pointed out by the Committee that Switzerland, Austria-Hungary and Italy have adopted pure nickel for their minor coinage with very satisfactory results, the coins being hard, durable and retaining their color, while not corroding.

A FIRST prize of \$15, to be known as the Massachusetts Woman's Club Prize, and a second prize of \$10 will be awarded to the public school children in the State of Massachusetts who present the best practical studies on the value of our common toad. The prizes will be given by a committee of Clark University on or before November 1, 1898. All essays must be sent in to Professor C. F. Hodge on or before October 1st.

THE regulations for the Gedge prize, Cambridge University, founded by a bequest of £1,000 by the late Mr. Joseph Gedge, M.B., of Gonville and Caius College, have been announced. The prize is to be offered for competition in every second year and to consist of the interest on the capital sum. It is to be awarded for the best original observations in physiology or in any branch thereof, that is to say, in histology, physiological chemistry or physiological physics, the word physiology being used in a wide sense. Candidates have to be members of the University who during six terms subsequent to the beginning of the term of their matriculation have studied in the University laboratories or attended University lectures, and who at the time of the award of the prize are of not less than five years' and not more than seven years' standing from matriculation.

*Nature* quotes from the *Rendiconti del Reale Istituto Lombardo* the conditions of the prizes offered for competition in 1898 and 1899. Most of these prizes are open to all nations; but the essays must be written in Italian, French or Latin, and forwarded under a motto to the Secretary of the Istituto Lombardo, Palazzo di Brera, Milan. The prizes of general interest are the following: (1) The Institute's prize of 1,200 lire for the most complete catalogue of extraordinary meteorological events from the most ancient times down to 1800, excluding auroras and earthquakes, which have already been catalogued. Last date, May 1, 1899. (2) The Cagnola prize of 2,500 lire and a gold medal (value 500 lire) for a critical review of the theory of electric dissociation, with new experiments. Last date, April 30, 1898. (3) The Brambilla prize of 4,000 lire to whoever shall have introduced into Lombardy the most useful new machinery or industrial process. Names to be sent in by April 30, 1898.

THE *British Medical Journal* announces that the services of Surgeon-Major Ronald Ross have been placed at the disposal of the Surgeon-General with the Government of India, in order that he may undertake a special inquiry as to the relation of the mosquito to the hæmatozoon of malaria. Surgeon-Major Ross has already done very important work on this subject, and it is not too much to hope that, with the special opportunities which will now be afforded to him, he will be able to clear up the question. Should he be able to establish on a sure basis the theory that the mosquito is the extracorporeal or alternative host of the malaria parasite a great step in advance will have been made. It may not improbably render possible an intelligent prophylaxis against malarial fevers for in no department of human activity is it more true that 'knowledge is power' than in that of preventive medicine.

A JOINT committee of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee and the Technical Education Board of the London County Council has been considering the practicability of laying out plots of ground in certain of the London parks in such a manner as will afford assistance to scholars at elementary and secondary schools in

the study of practical botany. According to the *London Times*, reports have been presented to the committee on the educational side of the question by Dr. Garnett and Dr. Kimmins. The following suggestions were contained in these reports: 1. That a very valuable experiment could be conducted on a scale sufficiently wide if, in each of three parks, about 20 rods of ground were devoted to the cultivation, for school purposes, of hardy typical plants belonging to 20 natural orders. 2. The beds should be arranged near the paths, one bed being devoted to each order. They should differ in size, the largest being a little under 500 feet square, and the smallest about 100 feet square in area, so that the average of the 20 beds would be approximately one rod. 3. The specimens selected should be such as are suitable for growth, and each should be labelled with its common name and its Latin, or systematic name. 4. Labels giving the names and natural orders should be attached to the more important trees, shrubs and plants throughout the parks selected. 5. A botanical guide to the parks selected should be published under the superintendence of the Technical Education Board and the Parks Committee jointly. 6. Teachers holding printed orders from the Technical Education Board should be able to obtain from the superintendent in each park such specimens as might be required for botanical study in the schools, so far as they could be applied without detriment to the specimens. In a report upon the matter the Parks and Open Spaces Committee adopt these suggestions, and, putting them in the form of recommendations, will shortly submit them to the County Council for approval. They point out that some further suggestions were made, but they thought it would be better in the first instance to deal with the subject quite in the sense of an experiment, and if, later on, it should prove to be resulting advantageously to the schools, possibly the arrangements might be extended to the cultivation of important types of the lower orders of plants, such as fungi, mosses, ferns, etc., and facilities might be afforded for the study of aquatic plants. The chief officer of the Parks Department reported that the proposed arrangements were quite practicable at

any of the larger parks, but that some expenditure would be necessary. Upon that point the chief officer has been instructed to submit a report. It is proposed that the experimental beds shall be formed at Battersea-park, Ravenscourt-park and Finsbury-park.

#### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS.

THE will of the late Jacob Tome gives the residue of his estate, estimated at \$3,000,000, to the Jacob Tome Institute of Port Deposit, Md., which during his lifetime he had founded and richly endowed.

THE Maryland Senate has passed a bill appropriating \$50,000 a year for two years to Johns Hopkins University. It is to be hoped that the bill will be passed by the House, which, as we stated last week, rejected the bill appropriating \$100,000 to the University.

HON. CHESTER W. KINGSLEY has given the Worcester Academy \$25,000 to complete the sum needed to defray the expenses of the new Kingsley Laboratory, to the dedication of which we referred recently.

In a letter to the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, Charles B. Rouss, of New York, says: "I hereby send you my check for \$10,000. Having been informed that the \$25,000 previously donated by me was not sufficient to complete the physical laboratory building which bears my name, and being unwilling to permit anyone else to have part in a work which I consider to be my special privilege, I desire so much of the sum sent as may be needed to be used in liquidating the balance due on the cost of the building, the remainder to be added to the equipment fund."

THE Trustees of the Teachers' College, Columbia University, announce the foundation of five fellowships of the value of \$500 yearly; and carrying the privilege of free tuition, and ten scholarships of \$150 a year, each to be awarded annually; to be tenable for one year, and to be designated respectively as Trustees' Fellowships and Trustees' Scholarships. These fellowships and scholarships will be awarded to applicants who give evidence of special fitness to undertake courses of higher study and original investigation in education. Two new scholarships