In the gallery of reptilia an important and valuable acquisition has recently been made in the shape of an unusually large specimen and a skeleton of the Gangetic crocodile or gavial of the Ganges, measuring 16 feet in length. It is thought that no other skeleton of this species is to be seen in any museum or collection in Europe. This powerful and truly formidable looking animal feeds chiefly on fishes, for the capture of which its long and slender snout and sharp teeth are well adapted, but it occasionally devours human bodies.

One of the most beautiful sections of the Museum is the coral gallery, where many decided improvements are noticeable. Thus the sea-anemones in spirit, which do not look very much like sea-anemones in the sea, have had cleverly-executed water-color drawings of living specimens put beside them. The new whale room, for the exhibition of life-sized models and skeletons of whales on a scale never before approached, is making good progress under the director's constant supervision, and will probably be ready for the admission of the public early in the summer.

In the department of geology the recent accessions are many and varied. One which is of special importance and interest is the complete skeleton of *œpyornis*, an extinct wingless bird as large as an ostrich, 5 feet 2 inches in height. The specimen has been reconstructed from the immense series of remains collected in the neighborhood of Sirabé by Dr. C. I. Forsyth Major during his recent expedition to Madagascar. Close to it has been placed for comparison a skeleton of the recent African ostrich.

An interesting specimen presented by Dr. John Murray, of the Challenger, has lately been added to the collection of rocks in the mineral gallery. It is a fragment of gneiss or rock dredged up by the Challenger from diatom ooze at a depth of 1,950 fathoms in the Antarctic Ocean, latitude 53° 55′ S., longitude 108° 35′ E., and is stated to be indicative of Continental land, it having been probably transported by the Antarctic icebergs from land situated towards the South Pole.

Recent additions to the botanical gallery include a table case illustrating parasitic flowering plants. The visitor will note not only the familiar mistletoe, but the more degenerate forms closely resembling fungi in their outward appearance. On the opposite side of the gallery a similar case is nearing completion in which the singular adaptations of flowers to fertilization are exhibited. The models of flowers by Miss Emett are among the most successful this lady has ever made. The exhibition of British fungi is also now nearly complete and the arrival of a new pedestal case is all that is needed to set forth the continuation of Mr. Worthington Smith's beautiful series of drawings. Perhaps the addition which will be first noted by the visitor is the splendid cycad recently presented by Mr. Horace Munn, of Jamaica.

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

RECENT STUDIES IN MAYA HIEROGLYPHICS.

DR. FORSTEMANN has added another (the 7th) instalment to his series 'On the decipherment of the Maya Manuscripts.' It is devoted to the interpretation of the upper portions of pp. 53–58 and lower portions of pp. 51–58 of the Dresden Codex. They are shown to be occupied with an attempt to obtain a common measure for the apparent years of the planets and the periods of the sun, moon and *tonalamatl*.

The same writer has in *Globus* (Bd. LXXIII., 9 and 10) a very able analysis of the Mayan calendar with reference to the gods governing the days (Die Tagegötter der Mayas). Most of the identifications will be accepted by scholars, though some still remain unknown or dubious.

In the *American Anthropologist* for April

Professor Cyrus Thomas has a critical review of Goodman's book on the 'Maya Inscriptions.' The reviewer points out the incorrect and unscientific character of most of the alleged discoveries, while recognizing that Mr. Goodman has shown for the first time that the periods are indicated on the monuments by symbols instead of by position, as in the codices, and has identified some of these symbols.

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

The first number has appeared of the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, edited by Dr. Thomas Achelis, and published by J. C. B. Mohr, Leipzig (14 Marks). It is a well-printed octavo of 112 pages, containing original articles by Hardy, Roscher, Seler and others, and reviews of recent works. The editor is well and favorably known for his works on ethnology and special studies in comparative religion. The spirit in which the *Archiv* will be conducted is that of broad inductive research and modern philosophical investigation. The problem which will constantly be presented in connection with religious history will be psychological, that is, the critical analysis of religious development as exhibiting the general religious consciousness of the species.

The article by Dr. Seler is on an American subject—the derivation of certain elements in the myths of Central America. That by Roscher is on the significance of Pan in Greek mythology.

It is to be hoped that the *Archiv* will receive adequate support.

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NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

In a recent number of the *Comptes Rendus* A. Leduc has a paper on the composition of air at different places. His figures for the densities of different gases compared with oxygen agree very closely with those of Lord Rayleigh, but compared with air there is a constant difference, which amounts to about 0.0001. From this he draws the conclusion that the air of Paris contains 0.1 per cent. more oxygen than that of London.

The determination of the density of a gas has until recently been considered a difficult operation, requiring not only rather elaborate apparatus but a considerable quantity of the gas to be measured. Professor Ramsay has, however, shown in his work with argon and helium that it is possible to determine the density with accuracy with a quantity as small as thirty cubic centimeters. T. Schloesing, Jr., has now described, in the *Comptes Rendus*, an ingenious method devised by him which is simple, rapid, and accurate within 0.1%, and can be carried out with only a few cubic centimeters of gas. It is based upon balancing in a U-tube two gases, one of which is easily absorbable and whose density is known. After equilibrium is attained, the known gas is absorbed (as carbon dioxid by potash) in order to determine the invisible surface of separation. Very narrow tubes are used to reduce the unavoidable diffusion of the gases, and this has the advantage of reducing the quantity of gas necessary for determination. Hydrogen alone of gases yet examined diffuses too rapidly for the determination of its density. It would seem that this method will prove of great use.

Another paper from the *Comptes Rendus* should be noted in which D. Berthelot describes a new determination of the fusing points of silver and gold. A platinum-iridium thermo-electric cell was used for the purpose, and the melting-point of silver found to be 962° as an average of six experiments, while that of gold is 1064°. These figures are not far from those of Violle: silver 954°, gold 1035°; and the