

sources of the Philippines, has been prevented by the uncertainty of the political situation and the state of war there existing from prosecuting these investigations, through no fault, however, of either Admiral Dewey or General Otis, both of whom would ere this have provided the facilities for safe travel about the islands, etc., if it had been possible to do so. From recent advices from the military authorities at Manila, however, it appears that, not content to rest in idleness, Dr. Becker early attached himself to the Bureau of Military Information of the Army, and soon became the right-hand man of Major J. F. Bell, in charge. Official reports and papers that have since passed between Major Bell and the Commanding General, and letters from the officers to Director Walcott, record numerous valuable services rendered by Dr. Becker to the army through the Bureau of Military Information, and also repeated acts of gallantry and soldierly usefulness in action, and accord him high praise for his conduct. He is repeatedly and strongly complimented by his military superiors; from Major Bell to Generals MacArthur and Otis. The reports, which cover events only to the middle of March, mention no fewer than 14 military reconnaissances and active engagements had with the forces, in all of which Dr. Becker took part.

It has not yet been determined by the Director of the Survey how long Dr. Becker shall remain in the Philippine Islands, but it is believed that he will be able to make some substantial progress with his geologic investigations before he is recalled. Being skilled in rapid field observation, he will be able to advance the work rapidly if once he gets at it. It is not improbable that he is even now doing stratigraphic geology in the Island of Negros, with a view to correlating its structure with that of Cebu. At least, he expressed the hope when he last wrote to Director Walcott, March 1st, of being able to do this in April and after that of going to Cebu and studying the coal deposits.

It is reported that Dr. Becker contemplates returning to America via the Suez Canal and of making a study en route of the great tin deposits at or near Singapore.

W. F. M.

MAY 5, 1899

#### CONVERSAZIONE OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

THE first Conversazione of the season was held by the Royal Society at Burlington House, on May 3d. The guests were received by the President, Lord Lister, and a large number of men of science was present. The following particulars concerning the exhibits, which were of a more strictly scientific character than usual, are taken from the *London Times*: Professor Arthur Thomson exhibited a model to illustrate how natural curliness of the hair is produced. An exhibit from the Marine Biological Association of Plymouth illustrated methods of feeding of marine animals by means of living and preserved examples. A series of selected animals from the neighborhood of Plymouth was shown, illustrating different methods practiced for securing food. The Association also showed charts illustrating the distribution of the fauna and bottom deposits near the 30-fathom line from the Eddystone grounds to Start Point. Dr. Francisco Moreno, who has done so much for the exploration of Patagonia, exhibited a portion of skin of an extinct ground-sloth from a cavern in southern Patagonia, which has been exciting great interest among naturalists. To Dr. Moreno was also due a fine plaster reproduction of the skeleton of *Toxodon platensis*, an extinct ungulate quadruped from the Pampa formation, province of Buenos Ayres, Argentina. Dr. Woodward's selection of zoological specimens from Christmas Island, Indian Ocean, collected by Mr. C. W. Andrews, was of special interest, containing, as it did, some remarkable forms of insects, birds, and even rats. Not less interesting was the varied collection of birds, insects, shells, etc., brought home by Dr. H. O. Forbes and Mr. Grant from Sokotra.

Dr. Manson and Surgeon-Major Ross showed microscopes beneath which were displayed specimens of mosquitoes, showing the development of the parasites of malaria in their tissues, and also of the same parasites assuming deadly dimensions in the human tissues.

Among other exhibits were the new element Victorium, of the Yttrium group, one of the latest results of Sir William Crookes's long continued researches in phosphorescent spectra; Mr. Saville-Kent's natural-colour photographs

of various zoological and botanical subjects; Mr. Carus-Wilson's specimens of decomposed flints; Wehnelt's electrolytic contact breaker, which seems capable of producing extraordinary results; Mr. Everard im Thurn's beautiful water-color sketches of Guiana orchids; Mr. Shelford Bidwell's experiments demonstrating multiple vision; Mr. Joseph Goold's intersection patterns in compound-vibration curves; Sir Norman Lockyer's photographs of stellar spectra, and a very delicate and threadlike photograph of a meteor taken by Mr. C. P. Butler on the night of April 8, 1899.

Among the new instruments which specially attracted attention was the radiation recorder of Professor H. L. Callendar, so delicate that it shows when the slightest haze passes across the sky. The microscopic specimens illustrating the further researches which have been made into the effects of strain in metals by Professor Ewing and Mr. W. Rosenhain are noteworthy. Mr. A. Mallock's ingenious adaptation of thin films of pyroxyline for use as mirrors deserves mention, as do also Mr. H. N. Dickson's series of charts illustrative of temperature and salinity in the North Atlantic. The lantern exhibitions were particularly attractive, especially Mr. Kearton's slides illustrating the haunts and habits of British birds. Dr. Sorby also used the lantern to show some beautiful slides of Actinæ and other marine animals, and Mr. W. Duddell, oscillographs, applied to alternate current wave-forms, and to the Wehnelt interrupter.

#### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE next meeting of the American Society of Naturalists will be held at New Haven, Conn., during Christmas week. Most of the 'affiliated societies' have signified their intention of meeting at the same place.

At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Art and Sciences, held May 10, 1899, the Rumford medal was, on the recommendation of the Rumford Committee, awarded to Mr. Charles F. Brush, of Cleveland, for 'the Practical Development of Electrical Arc Lighting.'

PROFESSOR C. F. CHANDLER, of Columbia Uni-

versity, has received the regular nomination for President of the Society of Chemical Industry. The election takes place in July at the annual meeting. This Society numbers 3,200 chemists, of whom nearly 600 reside in the United States. Its headquarters are in London; it has sections also in Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester and New York. In the list of former Presidents appear the names of Sir Henry E. Roscoe, Sir Frederick Abell, Walter Welden, W. H. Perkin, E. K. Muspratt, David Howard, Professor James Dewar, Ludwig Mond, Sir Lowthian Bell, E. Rider Cook, J. Emerson Reynolds, Sir John Evans, E. C. C. Stanford, T. E. Thorpe, Thomas Tyrer, Dr. Edward Schunck, F. Clowes and George Beilby.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY has conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Science on Sir William Turner, professor of anatomy of the University of Edinburgh, and on the Rev. Thomas Wiltshire, emeritus professor of geology in King's college, London.

At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences on May 10, 1899, the following officers were elected: *President*: Alexander Agassiz; *Vice-President* for Class I.: John Trowbridge; *Vice-President* for Class II.: Alpheus Hyatt; *Vice-President* for Class III.: Augustus Lowell; *Corresponding Secretary*: Samuel H. Scudder; *Recording Secretary*: William Watson; *Treasurer*: Francis Blake; *Librarian*: A. Lawrence Rotch; *Member of the Committee of Finance*: Augustus Lowell; *Councillors* from Class I.: Henry Taber, Theodore W. Richards, Harry M. Goodwin; *Councillors* from Class II.: Benjamin L. Robinson, William T. Councilman, John E. Wolff; *Councillors* from Class III.: Barrett Wendell, Edward Robinson, James B. Ames; *Rumford Committee*: Erasmus D. Leavitt, Edward C. Pickering, Charles R. Cross, Amos E. Dolbear, Arthur G. Webster, Theodore W. Richards, Thomas C. Mendenhall; *C. M. Warren Committee*: Francis H. Storer, Charles L. Jackson, Samuel Cabot, Henry B. Hill, Leonard P. Kinnicut, Arthur M. Comey, Robert H. Richards.

THE following 15 candidates have been selected by the Council of the Royal Society to be