

or aggraded to a nearly even surface. The crescentic sand-dune is taken as a normal form on an open surface. The necessity of a former pluvial period to explain the wadies of deserts, as stated by some writers, is doubted; and in spite of the violence of occasional cloud-burst floods, the chief agency in the preparation of desert topography is held to be the wind; a conclusion that seems to have been long familiar to the Bedouin, just as the transportation of erratics by a former extension of glaciers has long been known to Swiss peasants. The importance of identifying ancient desert formations in the geological series is emphasized.

Although peneplanation under arid conditions is not excluded from the Walther discussion, the systematic advance of the processes of arid denudation through an ideal cycle and the description of the forms thus successively developed are not fully presented. Old and young deserts are not clearly separated. In some arid regions, the marginal deposits of the coarse waste rise upon the flanks of the enclosing mountains; in others a piedmont slope of evenly degraded rock, veneered with thin sheets of waste, slopes gently forward from the mountain base. The first is probably a younger form than the second; but no one has yet studied out the full series of still younger and still older forms of an arid landscape.

W. M. DAVIS.

THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

THE American Geographical Society will move into its new building in 81st Street, New York, in the course of the next two or three months. The Society has at present about 1,200 members and, to still further increase its numbers, has sent out a circular, from which we quote the following:

The objects of the American Geographical Society are: The collection, discussion and diffusion of geographical information; the promotion of the exploration of our territory and of the survey and preservation of our harbors; the establishment in the chief maritime city of the Union of a place where will be afforded the means of obtaining accurate information of every part of the globe, and the registration and careful record of discoveries and studies in geography and the related sciences.

The Society was founded in 1852. One of but twelve similar societies at that time, it now exchanges its publications with three hundred scientific associations scattered throughout the world.

The Society has outgrown the house, No. 11 West Twenty-ninth Street, in which it has been lodged for more than twenty years. A handsome fireproof building is now being erected in West Eighty-first Street, opposite Manhattan Square. This will afford perfect security to the library of 30,000 volumes—one of the foremost geographical libraries of the world—the thousands of maps and charts and the collection of atlases of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, now in the map rooms, and will also provide ample accommodation for readers and students.

Travelers, men of science, and others properly accredited, are welcomed at the rooms of the Society and freely offered the use of the library and collections.

The Society is now free from debt and possesses a property which has of late been steadily growing in value.

It is desired to add to the number of fellows on the roll in order to strengthen and extend the influence and the usefulness of the Society.

No special qualification for fellowship is required other than interest in the spread of knowledge and the advancement of science. The annual dues are \$10.

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF CENTRAL NATURALISTS.

At a meeting of the committee appointed by the Chicago meeting of naturalists to arrange for the next meeting, held at Chicago, March 28th, the following was voted. The vote has since been submitted to a number of the older members of the American Society of Naturalists living in the Central States and has been approved by them. It may, therefore, be taken to represent the prevailing sense of the naturalists of the Central States.

VOTED: Whereas, the naturalists of the Central States propose to meet annually at some convenient point for intercourse and the reading of papers;

And whereas, no point east of the Alleghenies (to which territory the meetings of the American Society of Naturalists are by its constitution confined) is practicable as such meeting point;

And whereas, the central naturalists would view with approval the formation of a national body which might properly be called the Amer-

ican Society of Naturalists, by which name the eastern society is now known ;

And whereas, it is desirable that the organization of the central naturalists should be co-ordinate with the eastern society ;

And whereas, it is desirable that all the naturalists of the country should, as far as possible, come together from time to time in a national general gathering ;

Resolved, that the naturalists of the Central States form a permanent organization and that they favor a coordinate relation of this association and that of the Eastern States, as eastern and central branches respectively of the American Society of Naturalists.

That the two organizations meet annually in their respective territories (except as stated below), have the same conditions of membership, elect their own officers and collect and disburse their own funds ;

That the records of the two branches, including lists of members, be published jointly at joint expense and under the joint editorship of the secretaries of the two branches ;

That every third year the two branches meet together alternately in the East and in the Central States, that the officers of the meeting be those of the receiving branch, and that visiting members enjoy full privileges, except as may be agreed upon at the time of joint ratification of this resolution ;

That this resolution be transmitted to the American Society of Naturalists at its Chicago meeting, with the suggestion that it be referred to a committee to arrange further details and that the report of the committee be received and acted upon at the same meeting ;

That, a copy of these resolutions be printed in *SCIENCE* to give an opportunity for full discussion of them.

C. B. DAVENPORT,
Secretary of Committee.

SCIENTIFIC POSITIONS UNDER THE GOVERNMENT.

A NUMBER of important scientific positions will be filled by civil service examination on June 3d. It is desired to establish an eligible register for the positions of plant physiologist and plant pathologist in the office of Plant

Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, with salaries of \$1,800 per annum. The competitors will not be assembled for this examination, but must make application for the special form and send the following information not later than the date mentioned. The statements in physiology, those in pathology being similar, together with the weights, are as follows :

1. A statement of the line of study pursued in the colleges in which the competitor has received degrees or in which he has carried on work :
 - (a) Technical and practical work with plant physiology. 20
 - (b) Scientific research in physiology and co-ordinate lines 20
 - (c) Submission of a list of articles on physiology and related subjects published by competitor 25
2. A statement of the competitor's experience as an executive officer or teacher..... 15
3. A statement of not less than 500 words setting forth the present status and prospective development of plant physiological research..... 20

An examination will be held on the same day in any city where postal free delivery has been established for the position of assistant in the seed laboratory of the Division of Botany with a salary of \$1,200, the subjects and weights being as follows :

1. Essay on methods of conducting purity tests (orthography and penmanship will be marked on this exercise) 10
2. Structural botany..... 15
3. Morphology of the seed 20
4. Reading botanical German 10
5. Drawing of seeds 15
6. Identification of seeds..... 30

An examination under similar conditions will be held for the position of a field assistant in the Department of Agriculture, with a salary of \$1,000. Here the subjects and weights are :

1. Forestry.....(sheet 1)..... 60
2. Botany.....(sheet 2)..... 10
3. English composition.....(sheet 3)..... 10
4. Education and experience.....(sheet 4)..... 20

An examination for the position of computer in the Division of Forestry, with a salary of \$1,000, will also be held, the subjects being :

1. Forest mensuration..... 60
2. General forestry..... 25