

the professorial staff, the president consults members of the faculty concerned. He invites their opinion as to who is the fittest man to fill the vacant chair. But the president does not confine his inquiries to his immediate circle of colleagues. University presidents and professors in America constitute almost a caste of their own. By virtue of well-organized clubs and associations, which cover the great continent like a network, they keep closely in touch one with another. Knowledge of the reputations that men are acquiring in academic work is wonderfully well diffused. The president who is seeking to fill a vacant chair has at command ready means of communication with presidents and professors of other universities. He is usually in correspondence with foreign scholars and teachers. He neglects no opportunity of collecting evidence as to the qualifications of professors, assistant professors and instructors in various parts of his own country. Finally, after due and thorough investigation, he forms his decision as to how the vacant post may be filled with greatest advantage to the institution over which he presides. He forwards an invitation to the chosen person to occupy the vacant office. The wisdom of his choice is rarely, if ever, questioned.

At every stage the election is the antithesis of a public contest. There are no self-nominated candidates. Consequently no one is defeated and no one triumphs over another. Everybody's feelings are scrupulously respected. The preliminary inquiries are pursued in the strictest confidence. Most important of all, no open advertisement on the part of either elector or elected is permitted. Every American professor with whom I spoke on the subject deemed it an intolerable strain on a scholar's proper modesty to require him to nominate himself for election, to describe his own attainments, to print a statement of his qualifications for a vacant office. Still more repugnant to the American code of academic ethics is it for a would-be professor to invite his acquaintances to eulogize his character or his writings with a view to circulating 'testimonials' in printed pamphlets.

Such conduct is generally held in the United States to be ignominious. Testimonial-hunting, as it is pursued in this country would prove a fatal bar there to promotion of any reputable kind.

The only argument that I have heard advanced in favor of the British system, whereby everybody is at liberty to offer himself for election for a vacant professorship, to declare his own merits, and to solicit confirmatory compliments from his friends, is that the elector's field of choice is thus usefully enlarged. But this argument is open to most serious question. Men of ordinary sensitiveness often refuse to submit themselves to the humiliating ordeal of public or semi-public competition for a vacant professorship, which in many respects reduces them to the level of advertising vendors of quack medicines. In effect the prevailing system often narrows the field of choice open to the electors, who are not in the habit of looking outside the panel of self-appointed candidates; it is, indeed, doubtful if honorable regard for the terms of their public advertisement permit them such a course of action.

It ought to be an easy matter for the heads of colleges and universities in Great Britain to adapt the American method to home requirements. The difficulties incident to the enormous area and population of the United States and to the vast and increasing number of academic institutions which are worthy of consideration there, are not present in this country. To pronounce the American system unworkable here is a confession of inferiority, from the point of view alike of ethics and practical efficiency, about which one would prefer to be silent.

SIDNEY LEE.

108 LEXHAM-GARDENS, W.,
June 3, 1903.

CURRENT NOTES ON METEOROLOGY.

THE CLIMATE OF BENGUET, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

"THERE is no region in the United States which has a more healthful or delightful climate than is afforded by the Benguet highlands, where a white man can perform heavy field labor without excessive fatigue or in-

jury to his health" (*Nat. Geogr. Mag.*, May, p. 203). "Great province. This is only 150 miles from Manila, with air as bracing as Adirondacks or Murray Bay. Only pines and grass lands. Temperature this hottest month in the Philippines in my cottage porch at three in the afternoon, 68° F. Fires are necessary night and morning" (Cablegram from Governor Taft to the Secretary of War, dated April 15). These are two recently published statements regarding the climate of the highlands of Benguet, in the northern part of the island of Luzon. Such broad general statements are misleading. They tend to spread false notions regarding the possibility of the acclimatization of the white race in the Philippines, and of outdoor work by white men in a tropical climate. Altitude, as in the highlands of Benguet, or of India, gives some relief in the way of lower temperature than at sea level. It means the absence of some tropical diseases which prevail on the lowlands, or a more rapid recovery from these diseases than at sea level. But all experience shows that altitude does not solve the acclimatization problem. A tropical sun is always a tropical sun. A tropical climate is always a tropical climate. It should be the aim of all Americans who send us accounts of Philippine climates, avoiding generalities based on first impressions, carefully to study the effects of the climate upon white men. The experience of English, French, Germans and others in the tropics furnishes evidence enough of the inaccuracy of much that has been written of the climate of the Philippines.

THE RECENT FLOODS.

The disastrous floods of March, April and June on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers naturally attracted much attention in the daily papers. Along the lower Mississippi River the March-April flood of the present year was the greatest on record if stages of water alone are considered, although the actual volume of water was probably less than in the flood of 1897, the greater heights in 1903 being the result of the extension of the levee

system. The rise of the Ohio and lower Mississippi Rivers was steady during February, owing to several heavy general rains, and during the last two days of the month another storm moved northeastward through the Ohio valley, making it certain that floods would occur. Other heavy rains occurred on March 7 and 8. The flood warnings of the Weather Bureau were timely and accurate. The stages which were forecasted, and those which were actually recorded, between Cairo and New Orleans are shown in the following table, taken from an article by H. C. Frankenfield on 'The Weather Bureau and the Recent Floods' (*Nat. Geogr. Mag.*, July, 1903).

Stations.	Forecast Stage (ft.).	Actual Stage (ft.).
Cairo	50.5 to 51	50.6
Memphis	40.0	40.1
Helena	51.0	51.0
Arkansas City.	53.0	53.0
Greenville	49.0	49.1
Vicksburg	52.0	51.8
New Orleans...	21.0	20.4 to 20.7

At Cairo the forecast was four days in advance, and at New Orleans twenty-eight days in advance of the crest.

At the end of May and early in June the floods on the lower, Missouri and the upper Mississippi were greater than any on record except that of 1844. They resulted from heavy daily rainfalls over Kansas, coming in connection with persistent low pressures over the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. Similar conditions prevailed eastward into northwestern Missouri and Iowa. At St. Louis warnings were issued on June 5 of a stage of thirty-eight feet in about four days. That stage was exactly reached on the fifth day.

RAINFALL AND SUNSPOTS.

DR. W. J. S. LOCKYER continues his investigation of rainfall and sunspot cycles (*Nature*, Vol. 68, pp. 8-10). Smoothed rainfall curves for the British Isles, Brussels, Madras, Bombay, Cape Town and the Upper Ohio valley show a long-period variation at all the stations, and further, the occurrence of the greatest rainfall generally in the years 1815, 1845

and 1878-83, with the minima about the years 1825-30, 1860 and 1893-5. A continuation of the curves, based on the assumption that the apparent law already recognized holds good, indicates that the year 1913 will be at about the middle of the next wet epoch. The sunspot curve shows a close correspondence with the rainfall curves. There appears to be a long-period solar change of thirty-five years, the minimum of sunspots corresponding roughly with the maximum of rainfall. Dr. Lockyer concludes that 'since this long-period rainfall cycle synchronizes so well with the solar changes, the latter may render valuable assistance in determining the epochs of these dry and wet cycles.'

R. DEC. WARD.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

OPENING OF THE LAKE LABORATORY OF THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY.

ON the afternoon of July 2, the new Lake Laboratory building of the Ohio State University, located on Cedar Point, Sandusky, Ohio, was formally opened. Several scientists from the various institutions of the State were present at the exercises, while many of those unable to be present responded with letters of congratulations and well-wishes. The director, Professor Herbert Osborn, opened the session by reading extracts from these letters, after which the first speaker of the day, Professor C. J. Herrick, of Denison University was introduced. Professor Herrick spoke on the Summer Laboratory as an instrument of scientific research. He took the stand that such institutions fulfil their functions not merely by giving investigators facilities and materials for research, but particularly in the culture of the investigators themselves. Exchange of ideas and consequent broadening of view is an important point in the consideration of the value of summer laboratories. The speaker expressed a hope that the several scientific institutions of the state would cooperate with the State University in making the laboratory an institution of the highest usefulness and gave assurance that such would be the policy of the colleges and universities of Ohio.

Hon. J. T. Mack, of Sandusky, a member of the Board of Trustees and representing that body, outlined the policy of the university with respect to the laboratory and emphasized the fact that it is a laboratory for the use of the scientific men of the state, regardless of their affiliations.

Captain Alexis Cope, secretary of the university, gave a detailed history of the laboratory as shown by the archives of the university. The idea of such an institution originated with the late Dr. Kellicott, in 1894. During the succeeding year, appropriations were made for an addition to the State Fish Commission building in Sandusky, the whole of which could be used during the summers as a lake laboratory. In 1899 the present director, Professor Osborn, made a request to the board for a more commodious building and recommended that it be erected on Cedar Point which is a tongue of sand twelve miles long and a few hundred feet wide at most. This was favorably received and the present building is the outcome.

Professor Denny, dean of the College of Arts of the University followed this speaker with the theme 'Comradeship in Science.' Men of science should associate with one another, as by so doing they become inspired to greater efforts and disappointments are belittled as they see how others meet and overcome difficulties. The dean said that the laboratory was a part of the university and that full credit would be given toward degrees for work done.

The director, Professor Osborn, concluded the program by thanking the friends of the institution and those that have acted as its promoters. The professor gave briefly a history of summer laboratories, tracing their origin to Penckese and Agassiz. He said that a new life is put in biological work by the founding of such institutions in that live material and natural environment is had in easy access. The director reiterated the desire expressed by another speaker that the laboratory would become, as its expressed purpose is, an open meeting ground for all biological workers of Ohio and adjacent states.