

Medullated Fibers in the Oculomotor Nerve of the White Rat and of the Cat at Different Ages.' The increase in number of medullated fibers is more closely correlated with the advance in body-weight than of age. The medullated fibers increase in size during the life of the animal. The two types, 'large' and 'small,' increase in diameter at the same rate. Dr. Edinger contributes a criticism of Dr. Yerkes' article on the sense of hearing of frogs, published last year, and this is followed by a reply from Dr. Yerkes.

The Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases, for February, opens with a paper by Dr. Charles L. Dana on those forms of muscular atrophy which are progressive in character, and are degenerative and central in origin, viz., progressive ophthalmoplegia, bulbar paralysis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and the various types of spinal progressive atrophy, whether beginning in the arms, legs, shoulders or hip girdle. The paper presents a clinical study of seventy-two cases, and is illustrated. Dr. Hoppe follows with a discussion of hysterical stigmata caused by organic brain lesions. Dr. C. K. Mills reports a case of crural monoplegia, probably representing the early stage of a unilateral ascending paralysis due to degeneration of the pyramidal tracts, and Dr. Spiller discusses briefly the question of separate sensory centers in the parietal lobe for the limbs.

THE *Journal of the Outdoor Life*, published at Trudeau, N. Y., in the Adirondack Mountains, has been made the official organ of the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, of which Dr. Herman M. Biggs, medical director of the New York City Health Department, is president. The membership of the association includes the leading workers in the field of tuberculosis, both lay and professional, throughout the United States and Canada. The *Journal of the Outdoor Life* aims to be helpful to persons suffering from or having a tendency toward lung trouble. It deals with the outdoor treatment of tuberculosis in an intelligent and scientific manner and, while

not advocating self-treatment by the laity, or attempting to supplant personal medical advice, it points out some of the common pitfalls that beset the unwary health-seeker. It advocates fresh air, nourishing food, carefully regulated exercise and competent medical supervision.

IN the near future the *Schweizerische Naturforschende Gesellschaft* intends to publish a national journal containing investigations by Swiss students of science. It will be supported by the Federal Government. At present the details concerning the character and form of the journal are being discussed by the various Cantonal branch societies.

IT is announced that *American Medicine*, edited by Dr. George M. Gould, will hereafter be published monthly instead of weekly.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: On page 7 of the issue of SCIENCE for January 5, 1906, in the address of the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, appears the assertion that the large editions of government publications imply a 'pecuniary waste,' because many of the copies fall into the hands of persons not competent to appreciate them. That seems a very short-sighted view, explainable only upon the theory that the distinguished speaker considered all who were not in position to receive, or buy, or secure access to limited editions are not competent to appreciate them. Large editions are greatly to be commended and are certainly not a pecuniary loss in the end, for with the constant increase of public and quasi-public libraries and consequent search for publications to complete the collections, and the increased demand arising from constantly increasing numbers of scientific workers, the great majority of copies of all worthy works sooner or later reach the hands of men who can use and appreciate them, or become available in school or public libraries. The high prices of many publications issued by educational institutions and private publishers pro-

hibit their possession by struggling and poorly paid workers in scientific fields both in and out of colleges and universities, who are fully able to use them and who could do more and better work if they had the volumes in their own libraries, instead of being compelled to waste so much valuable time in visiting public libraries. Are such investigators entitled to consideration, or should only a favored few be provided with proper facilities? Again, the limited editions of such publications only supply the immediate demand, leaving none for the investigators or colleges and public libraries of the future. The large editions of the government publications, on the other hand, make it possible for all workers and institutions to obtain them. The writer has found it practically impossible to obtain some university publications, while he has never had much difficulty in obtaining any of the government publications at very reasonable prices, from dealers in such works, the reason being the larger editions. The copies which pass into the hands of people who can not or do not wish to use them are not lost to the world, but soon find their way into the market places, where they may be had by the constantly increasing army of students.

The learned men of our eastern institutions, where books have been accumulating for a century or more and all of the early volumes of serial publications are available, can not appreciate the fact that any competent student can possibly be situated where he has not access to such literature. There are hundreds of competent men and women throughout the land, far from large libraries, doing excellent work in the advancement of science and capable of much better work with better facilities. Their very isolation from other workers makes the need of literature bearing upon their lines of work more necessary. The government gives them much information without cost and much more at merely nominal cost. Students of ability, making great sacrifices, living far from the centers of civilization in order to work up the flora, fauna or geological phenomena of sections unfrequented by scientists, are compelled, because of inability to consult the literature, to turn over

the fruits of painstaking work to more prominent writers for publication, the real workers getting but scant credit therefor. It may surprise some eastern scientists to learn that many publications less than twenty years old, issued by educational institutions and learned societies, as well as important scientific magazines, are unavailable to Rocky Mountain students except by travelling hundreds of miles. The western libraries are comparatively young and lack endowments. The prices of many works preclude their acquisition, and limited editions of others make their acquirement impossible because they are already in possession of public and quasi-public libraries. This great need of the west is well worthy the consideration of wealthy men who wish to endow a noble cause. In the meantime the matter of limited editions should be discouraged as far as possible and large editions commended. The author of the sentiment herein criticized might learn a valuable lesson by noting the number of papers marked 'out of print' in the catalogues of university and society publications, including those of his own institution. Should 'out of print' be said of any publication, and should a work which the government can produce for from one to two dollars cost from eight to twenty-five dollars when issued by a great educational institution?

Another great misfortune is that so many publications are attempting to cover the same ground. This is particularly unfortunate in systematic zoology and botany, where one does not dare publish a new species without first searching the proceedings of all the local scientific societies, the publications of all the educational institutions and innumerable other works, unless he concludes to depend entirely upon general indices, which are usually quite incomplete. Every naturalist knows that descriptions of species are continually appearing in the most out-of-the-way and unexpected places. Zoologists and botanists should rise up in arms and protest against publishing such descriptions in any except serials devoted largely to such matters. One university has adopted an iron-clad rule that all original descriptions of species shall

be excluded from its publications, requiring them to be first sent to some prominent magazine devoted to the particular line. If others would do the same it would greatly simplify the work of naturalists.

JUNIUS HENDERSON.

MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO,
BOULDER, COLO.

A SUGGESTION FOR AN INTERNATIONAL
BIBLIOGRAPHIC EXCHANGE.

WE, in the United States, have long looked forward to the creation of a bibliographical institute in this country which will exercise supervision over all affairs coming within its scope. Two things are wanting: first, the requisite endowment, and, second, a wide and responsive spirit of cooperation. It is with the latter that this note will attempt briefly to deal. The writer recently suggested in the *Library Journal* (30: 857-858) that a bibliographic bulletin be issued by the Library of Congress to disseminate bibliographic intelligence, prevent duplication and incite cooperation. This would be an important step toward a solution of the problem, but there is yet another plan that seems also to give promise of immediate results.

Let the various historical and scientific societies adopt and distribute, in duplicate, a uniform blank calling for reports (titles and scope) of special bibliographies in preparation. Nearly every investigator is compiling a reference-list more or less extensive. The societies, upon receiving reports, should preserve the originals and transmit the duplicates, if of a scientific character, to the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, or, if not of scientific import, to the Library of Congress. The two last-named bodies could likewise distribute to their own clientele, single copies of a similar uniform blank. In fact, it might be well to have one of those two inaugurate the work, their formal blanks to be used as models by the societies, etc.

Example is better than precept. A plan analogous to that above described was successfully carried out by the librarian of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, 18 Somerset Street, Boston, Mass., who secured more than five hundred reports of

genealogies in preparation. These are preserved in Tengwall files, in strict alphabetic order by surnames, and data therefrom are promptly supplied to inquirers. If one society of restricted scope can accomplish so much, what might reasonably be expected as responses to a like invitation extended by the Library of Congress or the Smithsonian Institution, having all literature and the whole learned world upon which to draw? This knowledge of inedited collections is often necessary and important. It is characteristic of our national impatience that we are not content with published material. Like the Athenians of old, we seek constantly that which is new. Nor is this altogether unreasonable: history and science are making such rapid progress that if a student expects adequately to review any subject, he must, perforce, avail himself of the very latest researches, bibliographical included. Hence, a growing list of special bibliographies in preparation would be very useful and would aid greatly in that general diffusion of knowledge for which one of our oldest institutions so nobly stands!

The suggestion made is one involving a minimum of expense; in fact, the cost would be merely nominal, with probable returns of manifold value. Means would thus be afforded for opening intercommunication between those interested in any subject. In this good work it must not be forgotten that the *London Notes and Queries* has quietly but unquestionably become the chief factor.

The Carnegie Institution of Washington, as well as many universities and colleges, could collaborate with the proposed exchange, to their mutual advantage. In this simple plan, therefore, seems to lie the possible development of universal cooperation or at least a nearer approximation thereto than has yet been manifested. A reviewer in the *Library Journal* (30: 428) commented on the extreme difficulty of arousing cooperation in bibliographic work, but is there not now within our power a way to gain even that desideratum?

EUGENE F. MCPIKE.

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