

will be abundant opportunity for members of the section to present papers. The Plattsburg meeting is one primarily for field excursions.

The Hotel Champlain, charmingly situated overlooking the lake, will accommodate 300 to 400 persons. The rate will be about four dollars a day.

The Champlain Assembly, incorporated as the 'Catholic Summer School of America,' has invited the members of Section E, through its director, Mr. John B. Riley, to be its guests during the meeting. Rooms may be secured at one dollar a day in the buildings of the Champlain Assembly. Members may take their meals at the Champlain Club; breakfast, lunch, or supper, fifty cents; dinner, seventy-five cents. The grounds of the Champlain Assembly are three miles south of Plattsburg and less than half a mile from the Hotel Champlain. Both may be reached from Plattsburg by steam-train or trolley.

A circular will be sent about June 15 to those who plan to attend the meeting. This will give information in regard to railroad rates. The summer excursion rates will doubtless make it possible to secure round-trip tickets for a little more than one and one third single fare.

The sectional committee of Section E extends a cordial invitation to all members of the Geological Society of America and the Association of American Geographers to attend the Plattsburg meeting.

F. P. GULLIVER,
Secretary Section E

NORWICH, CONN.,
April 25, 1907

THE LEICESTER MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION¹

THE British Association is assured of a hearty welcome to Leicester for its seventy-seventh annual meeting to be held there from July 31 to August 7, under the presidency of Sir David Gill, K.C.B., F.R.S. Leicester is a place of great antiquity, few towns in England having a longer history of uninterrupted activity. Its Roman remains include the 'Jewry Wall,' a remarkable example of brick-

work, and some mosaic pavement *in situ*. The geological features of the district are comprehensive, the Charnwood Forest, with its rocks providing many a geological puzzle, being within a few miles of the town. Botanists, too, have a happy hunting-ground there. The local committees and sub-committees are working hard to insure the success of their efforts, and great interest is being shown on all sides in the visit of the association to Leicester. A guarantee fund of more than 3,300*l.* has been raised towards the necessary expenses of the welcome, and this without any public appeal being made. No less than eleven amounts of 100*l.* and upwards are included in this sum.

A call has been made on all the principal halls and public buildings throughout the town for general and sectional use, and it is believed that the arrangements when completed will be most satisfactory in every way. The greatest difficulty the executive committee have had to meet has been the fact that Leicester possesses no town hall or public building large enough for the purposes of the holding of the usual conversazione and general reception of the large number of members and guests anticipated. An ingenious suggestion, however, on the part of the chairman of the executive committee (Mr. Alfred Colson), which has met with the full approval of all concerned, promises to overcome all obstacles, and even to make the proposed conversazione additionally attractive on account of the unique way in which it will be housed. The intention is to utilize the whole of the present museum buildings, including the art gallery and mayoral reception rooms, for the use of which permission has been granted, and to erect on the four sides of the grass square adjoining a loggia or corridor constructed entirely of timber, 25 feet in width, forming a covered promenade about 500 feet in length. The four outer sides will be closed, but the inner sides, overlooking the grass-plot, will be open, and so constructed as to be easily beautified with floral decorations. Internally the loggia will be draped with incombustible material and fitted with electric light and suitable furniture. Besides answering for the reception to be given by the Leicester Literary and Philo-

¹ From *Nature*.

sophical Society, the structure and grounds, with a military band in attendance, will make a convenient general rendezvous throughout the week.

A further edition of a very interesting work, 'Glimpses of Ancient Leicester,' by a local author, Mrs. Fielding Johnson, is being issued in connection with this meeting, and a handbook by another Leicester lady, Mrs. Nuttall, will be provided. The latter book will contain chapters on subjects of scientific interest prepared by various experts specially for the use of visitors.

Excursions are being arranged to many points of interest in the district, and the Mayor, Alderman Sir Edward Wood, J.P., will issue invitations to an evening fête in the Abbey Park. Sir Samuel Faire, J.P., will give a garden-party, and it may be taken for granted that the social side of the meeting will be well provided for. The comfort and enjoyment of all attending the meeting will not be overlooked, while the objects of the existence and visit of the association will throughout the week have the first consideration and thought.

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

THE American Museum of Natural History, New York, will hereafter be open to the public free of charge at all times. Mr. Morris K. Jesup, president, has addressed the following letter to Dr. Hermon C. Bumpus, the director of the museum:

From the time of the founding of the American Museum of Natural History—now nearly forty years ago—certain days of each week have been reserved for 'members,' pupils of the public schools, special students and artists, the public being admitted on these days (Mondays and Tuesdays) only on the payment of an admission fee. Although this is almost a universal custom, I am convinced that its continuation by the American Museum is now of doubtful expediency.

This reservation really amounts to the closing of our doors to the public for approximately one-third of the time, and while, for reasons of economy, it may have been necessary during our early history, we should not forget that the American Museum is a municipal institution, it is primarily

for the public, and any regulation that interferes with the general enjoyment of its privileges is contrary to the spirit of its founders and opposed to the wishes of its supporters.

The growth of the museum during the last few years has made it possible to accommodate large bodies of school children without interfering materially with the use of the exhibition halls by adults. Special students are now given laboratory facilities well removed from visitors, and artists have long found every encouragement for their work in private rooms or in portions of the gallery temporarily partitioned off for their use.

It is true that free admission to the museum on Mondays and Tuesdays has long been enjoyed as one of the many 'privileges of membership,' but I thoroughly believe that those who have contributed and are contributing towards the support of this institution are not actuated by selfish motives; they contribute because they believe in the work that the museum is doing and because they derive pleasure from being associated with it.

I wish therefore—and in this I believe I have the support of the entire board of trustees—that until further notice arrangements be made to have the American Museum of Natural History open daily and its exhibition halls absolutely free to all.

In forwarding a copy of this letter to members of the museum, the director says:

The enclosed letter of President Jesup will meet the hearty approval of all interested in the welfare and development of public educational institutions.

When the American Museum was relatively small, and the exhibition halls were consequently often overcrowded, there were valid reasons for restricting the attendance on certain days, but with the recent growth and the provision of special facilities for students and others specially interested, these reasons no longer exist. The attendance is constantly growing, and it is a matter of common remark that those visiting the museum are seriously interested. They are orderly, intelligent and earnest. The museum is not a resort for the idle. The location is such as generally to require the expenditure of considerable time in travel on the part of the visitor, and although the admission fee has been small, it is nevertheless more than many can afford, and hundreds, even thousands, have been turned away thereby.

It is thought that this action on the part of President Jesup is in the line of progress, and it will doubtless add materially to the already large number who are identified with the museum as