Furthermore, the statements regarding the cost of manufacture of industrial products, such as alcohol, unless they have been scrutinized and confirmed by experienced manufacturers, must be accepted with reserve and may also have some tendency to defeat the object of the book. WM. MCMURTRIE

Synopsis of Mineral Characters. By RALPH W. RICHARDS. New York, John Wiley & Sons; London, Chapman & Hall, Ltd. 1907.

This is an alphabetically arranged list of minerals and their chief physical characteristics, with concise definitions and descriptions; the chemical composition expressed by an empirical formula. Simple blowpipe reactions are also given. The book is intended as a reference work for those who have studied mineralogy and need notes to aid in the identification of minerals in the field. It is a compact 12mo of 100 pages, which may be carried about in the pocket conveniently, and will undoubtedly prove very useful to students and field workers. J. P. IDDINGS

SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES

THE FORTIETH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE KANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

AT the meeting of the Kansas Academy of Science held in Emporia on November 29 and 30, among the many important papers read the following may be mentioned:

"Natural Gas obtained from Trees," by F. W. Bushong and D. F. McFarland. This paper gives an analysis of natural gas obtained by boring into cottonwood trees. The authors showed that this gas contained 7.21 per cent. of carbon dioxide and about 61 per cent. of marsh gas, and 30 per cent. of nitrogen. L. E. Sayre discussed the percentage of extractives in certain drugs and spices, and commented on the necessity of having improved and reliable methods for making these determinations. He also mentioned some "fake" medical preparations that were upon the market, and referred to the work of the board of health in trying to reform the fraudulent methods of labeling. Considerable attention was paid to the progress of the water survey of Kansas in papers read upon the chemical work by E. H. S. Bailey and F. W. Bushong, on the bacteriological work by M. A. Barber and W. J. Starin, on the field work by H. N. Parker, and upon engineering problems by W. C. Hoad. C. F. Menninger read a paper on "Gastric Ferments," showing the remarkable advancement in the knowledge of this subject that has recently been made. F. B. Dains and E. W. Brown reported on the reaction of formanidines, giving an account of some newly discovered bodies. Some new finds in the Kansas Chalk beds were reported by Chas. H. Sternberg. A fossil tooth and other bones from Phillips County was discussed by J. T. Lovewell. A very practical paper on the "Food Habits of the Blue Jay" was read by L. L. Dyche. In this he showed the murderous intent of this bird, not only from observation, but also from numerous dissections of the blue jay, in which the heart and other vital parts of birds were found in the crop. Grace R. Meeker discussed a curious "Impatiens" recently found. W. Knaus, besides reporting on additions to Kansas coleoptera, mentioned some new coleoptera found in New Mexico, and many interesting species collected at night in McPherson, Kansas. "A Parasite on Eggs of Mantis" was the subject of a paper by Mrs. L. C. R. Smyth. L. C. Wooster read a paper on the "Antiquity of Man's Body-building Instincts." B. R. Rogers in a paper upon "Tuberculosis" emphasized the importance of greater precautions to prevent the spread of this disease. "The Abnormal Character of Man" was the title of a paper by J. M. McWharf. W. F. Hoyt in an entertaining way gave a report on some scientific frauds and fallacies. The "Buried City of the Panhandle" was the subject of a paper by F. L. Eyerly. B. B. Smyth discussed harmonics and magic hexagons. The advantage of fireless cooking was explained by J. T. Lovewell. H. P. Cady gave a résumé of his work on the occurrence of neon in natural gas, and showed that it was possible to obtain neon in appreciable quantities from this source. Papers on the "Quantity of Water found in Oysters" as they are marketed, and the "Occurrence of Copper in Oysters," were pre-

sented by J. T. Willard. A description of a fossil tusk found in Equus beds was given by E. O. Dare. The nomenclature of the carboniferous, showing the most recent classification as adopted by the Kansas Geological Survey, was discussed by E. Haworth and J. Bennett. The use of a score-card for the comparison of natural waters with the use of a different rating for surface waters, deep wells and shallow wells was discussed by E. H. S. Bailey. "Some Preliminary Studies on the Moon" was the subject of a paper by F. A. Marlatt.

The retiring president, J. A. Yates, gave the presidential address on the "Value of the Work of the Scientist to Humanity."

E. H. S. Bailey

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

The 640th meeting was held on December 7, 1907, Vice-president Bauer in the chair. In accordance with the by-laws of the society, the evening was devoted to hearing the president's address, which was delivered by Mr. John F. Hayford, on "The Earth, a Failing Structure."

The full text of this address will soon appear in Volume XV. of the *Bulletin of the Philosophical Society of Washington.*

The 37th annual meeting of the society was held on December 21, 1907, and was devoted to the presentation of the usual annual reports and the election of officers.

The following officers were duly elected for the ensuing year:

President—L. A. Bauer.

Vice-Presidents—A. L. Day, E. B. Rosa, C. K. Wead and C. G. Abbot.

Treasurer—B. R. Green.

Secretaries—G. K. Burgess, R. L. Faris.

General Committee—C. Adler, L. J. Briggs, E. Buckingham, W. A. DeCaindry, W. S. Eichelberger, E. G. Fischer, L. A. Fischer, R. A. Harris and P. G. Nutting.

R. L. Faris,
Secretary

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

THE NOBEL PRIZES

To the Editor of Science: Incorrect statements about the Nobel prizes and the supposed misappropriation of certain parts of the Nobel funds crop up every year as regularly as the question of the awarding of the prizes. These discussions began several years ago both in scientific journals and in the daily press, especially in America. There seems to be an impression that American scientists and authors are being neglected by the institutions which are distributing the awards. Such an opinion was expressed, for instance, on page 50, Vol. XVI., of the *National Geographic Magazine.* It was stated in regard to the fact that up to that time (January, 1905) no American had received a prize, that "the reason is not lack of appreciation abroad of what we are doing in this country, but the neglect of Americans to apply for the prizes." This sentence was frequently quoted by daily papers, which ruminated the same old question, using in yellow-journal style the most vituperative language against the Scandinavian institutions which have to do with the awarding of the prizes. But the papers referred to omitted what is mentioned in the editorial note in the *National Geographic Magazine.* It is there said, "In the awarding of prizes only those persons are considered who are formally nominated as candidates by some institution, college or scientific society of rank and character."

The Nobel prizes are not applied for, and those having the nominating power are not confined chiefly to Swedes, as is claimed in an article in the January, 1907, number of *The Popular Science Monthly* (pp. 91–92). The statutes concerning the distribution of prizes give the right to nominate a candidate for the literary prize competition to "Members of the Swedish Academy and of the Academies in France and Spain, which are similar to it in constitution and purpose; members also of the humanistic classes of other academies and of those humanistic institutions and societies that are on the same footing as academies; and teachers of esthetics, literature and history at university colleges." This certainly gives the nominating power to others than Swedes, and probably America has the lion's share of persons with power to nominate candidates. The Swedish Academy has eighteen members, and