

QUOTATIONS

ACADEMIC CONTROL IN GERMANY

THE German university world has been stirred to its depths by the sudden creation of a fourth professorship of economics at the University of Berlin, and the immediate appointment to it of a young teacher at the University of Kiel. For years past the three professorships of economics at Berlin have been held by Professors Wagner, Schmoller, and Sering—men of world-wide reputation, who have been assisted by four or five “extraordinary” professors and a swarm of docents. There was, therefore, not the slightest necessity, from the teaching point of view, of creating a new professorship. But early in this month the university authorities were astounded to receive from the Ministry of Education the notice that a new chair had been founded, and that Professor Ludwig Bernhard, thirty-two years of age, had been appointed to it. The ministry explained that, owing to certain circumstances requiring haste, there had been no time to sound the university authorities, as was the invariable custom; nor had it either consulted or received permission of the Prussian Diet, but had used for this purpose certain emergency funds given to it for an entirely different purpose. The real reason, it appears, is that Professor Bernhard has published a study of the Poles in Prussia which supported the government in its anti-Polish crusade. Having received a call from a South German university, he was about to accept it and give up his Polish studies. Merely that he might continue them, he was given a full professorship in the foremost German university. Naturally, the world of scholars is up in arms at this use of a great institution for purely political purposes.¹—New York *Evening Post*.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Un problème de l'évolution. La théorie de la récapitulation des formes ancestrales au cours de développement embryonnaire.

¹The philosophical faculty at Berlin has voted that, while it has no personal objection to Pro-

(Loi biogénétique fondamentale de Haeckel.)
Par L. VIALLETON. Montpellier, Coulet et Fils. 8vo. 1908.

This volume is a characteristic French production in that it gives with rare skill a comprehensive and clear summary of a complex scientific problem. To the American reader it will seem strange that no mention is made of Louis Agassiz, the most celebrated of all the defenders of the theory of recapitulation; and it is to be regretted that the article by Adam Sedgwick, “On the Law of Development, known as ‘Von Baer’s Law,’” which was published in the *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science*, 1894, should have remained unknown to the author. None the less, the work is very excellent of its kind. It is based upon a series of lectures delivered a year ago before the students of philosophy at Montpellier. The author gives an introduction and historical review, which deals with Meckel, his predecessors and followers, a résumé which biologists will surely welcome. He then passes in a series of chapters, IV.–VIII., to the presentation and discussion of the evidence in the structure and development of vertebrates, for and against the theory of recapitulation. This is certainly very well done; the selection of examples is apt, and they are laid before the reader in such a way that he is brought gradually to a clear understanding of the necessary limitations which must be put upon the law of recapitulation. These chapters deserve especially to be recommended to the attention of teachers and students of general biology.

The last chapter is devoted to presenting the ideas of Oskar Hertwig, and is essentially a critical analysis of Hertwig’s essay in the concluding volume of his “Handbook of Comparative Embryology.” Here, I think, the author is somewhat at fault in attributing so much originality to Hertwig. For many years embryologists have been familiar not only with the law of recapitulation, but with the professor Bernhard, it does not approve his appointment, owing to the fact it was not consulted. Thereupon Professor Bernhard declined the offer of the ministry of education.—Ed.