

Cochetopa national forests in Colorado, President Roosevelt has made them a reservation under the act for the preservation of American antiquities. The district will be known as the Wheeler National Monument.

At the invitation of Mr. George Otis Smith an informal conference was held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D. C., on January 2, 1909, for the purpose of discussing the progress of geologic work and with a view to bringing about a better coordination of the various investigations now being carried on. Professor T. C. Chamberlin presided at the meeting and of those invited to attend there were present: F. D. Adams, H. Foster Bain, Joseph Barrell, R. W. Brock, A. H. Brooks, Samuel Calvin, M. R. Campbell, T. C. Chamberlin, W. B. Clark, J. M. Clarke, Whitman Cross, H. P. Cushing, Arthur L. Day, B. K. Emerson, S. F. Emmons, N. M. Fenneman, H. E. Gregory, Arnold Hague, C. Willard Hayes, J. P. Idings, Arthur Keith, H. B. Kummel, A. C. Lane, Waldemar Lindgren, A. P. Low, W. C. Mendenhall, H. F. Osborn, T. W. Stanton, C. R. Van Hise, A. C. Veatch, David White, H. S. Williams, Bailey Willis.

THE Sheffield lectures at Yale University will be given this year, with two exceptions, by members of the scientific school faculty. The lectures will be illustrated and will be delivered on Friday evenings as follows:

January 15—"Growth of the North American Continent during Geologic Times," by Professor Charles Schuchert.

January 22—"The American Gem Stones," by Professor William E. Ford, '99 S.

January 29—"Paper Making from Wood," by Dr. Arthur L. Dean, '02 Ph.D.

February 5—"Dinosaurs: their Evolution and Distribution," by Professor Richard S. Lull.

February 12—"The Modern Steel Bridge," by Professor John C. Tracy, '90 S.

February 19—"The Safety Devices of the Human Body," by Professor Lafayette B. Mendel, '91.

February 26—"Influence of Geology on the History of Jamaica," by Dr. Rossiter W. Raymond.

March 5—"Recent Discoveries in Electricity and some of their Consequences," by Professor Lynde P. Wheeler, '94 S.

March 12—"The Iron Resources of the United States: their Past and Future," by Professor John D. Irving.

March 19—"Land Reclamation in the United States: the Problems, the Opportunity," by Dr. George T. Surface.

A STATEMENT regarding the anthracite industry of Pennsylvania has been prepared by Wm. W. Ruley, chief of the Bureau of Anthracite Coal Statistics, of Philadelphia. Mr. Ruley estimates that the shipments of anthracite for 1908 were 64,237,076 long tons, against 67,109,393 long tons in 1907, indicating a decrease of 2,872,317 long tons, or 4.28 per cent. If the quantity of coal sold to the local trade and used at the mines decreased in the same proportion, the total production in 1908 amounted to approximately 73,200,000 long tons, as against 76,432,421 long tons in 1907. Reports received by Edward W. Parker, statistician, of the United States Geological Survey, from state officials and others closely in touch with the coal-mining industry in the several states indicate that the output of the bituminous coal mines of the country in 1908 was between 320,000,000 and 330,000,000 short tons. If the final returns are found to agree closely with these preliminary figures they will indicate a decrease in production of 15 to 20 per cent. as compared with the production in 1907.

THE Third Congress on School Hygiene will be held in Paris from March 29 to April 2, 1909. There will be an exhibition in connection with the congress. The congress held its first meeting at Nuremberg in 1904, and its second in London in 1907.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

GIFTS to the amount of \$346,466.05 were announced at the recent meeting of the trustees of Princeton University, of which the largest, \$200,000, was that of Messrs. David B. Jones and Thomas D. Jones, of Chicago, for the Palmer Physical Laboratory endowment fund. Other gifts were \$25,370 from the committee of fifty and \$34,377.07 from the General Education Board.

MORE than \$40,000 has been subscribed towards a fund of \$100,000 to endow a chair of physiology at the University of Cincinnati, in honor of the late Joseph Eichberg.

It is announced by President John Thomas, of Middlebury College, that \$91,685.50 has been contributed toward the \$100,000 needed to secure the D. K. Pearson building and endowment fund of \$100,000.

By the will of Dr. James G. Wheeler, Broughton, the James Millikin University, Decatur, will come into possession of his estate, estimated to be worth from \$75,000 to \$125,000.

THE Ohio State University has received a gift of \$10,000 from Mr. Robert T. Scott, Cadiz, the income to be used for the aid of poor students.

THE medical department of the University of Pennsylvania, has concluded arrangements for holding the first annual "Home Coming, or Progressive Medicine Week," to be given for the benefit of the alumni of the school, and to occupy the Easter vacation period. Plans are being considered to have each head of a department arrange, with the cooperation of his assistants, a program which will note deviations from the old standards, as well as lay stress upon principles which by constant practise have become crystallized. The alumni of the medical school who have distinguished themselves in their profession will be invited to cooperate.

ABBOTT LAWRENCE LOWELL, since 1900 professor of the science of government in Harvard University and previously since his graduation from Harvard College and the Law School a lawyer practising in Boston, will succeed Mr. Eliot as president of Harvard University.

DR. CHARLES H. HASKINS, professor of history in Harvard University, has been appointed dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, to succeed the late Professor John Henry Wright.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

PECULIAR ELECTRICAL PHENOMENA

IN an article by Professor J. E. Church, Jr., in *SCIENCE*, November 6, 1908, page 651, entitled "Electric Disturbances and Perils on Mountain Tops," Professor Church describes

the peculiar brush discharges that emanated from the weather vane, the anemometer cups and other objects in an electric storm on Mount Rose, on October 20, 1907, between 6:30 and 7:30 P.M. He states also: "Whenever our hands arose in the air, every finger sent forth a vigorous flame."

It may be interesting to note that we find descriptions of similar phenomena in the Elizabethan era, and even in the days of Julius Cæsar. In the "Itinerary of Fynes Moryson" (Macmillan, 1908), Vol. 3, pp. 74-76, there is given an account of an electric storm on the night of December 23, 1601, at Kinsale, near Cork, Ireland. This storm, which took place in midwinter, and in a locality that was practically on the sea level, was preceded by "great lightning and terrible thunder" on the night of December 20, and by "continual flashes of lightning" on the night of December 21.

The following is Moryson's account:

All the night was cleare [*i. e.*, brilliant?] with lightning (as in the former nights were great lightning with thunder) to the astonishment of many in respect of the season of the yeare. And I have heard by many horsemen of good credit, and namely by Captaine Pikeman, Cornet to the Lord Deputies troope, a Gentleman of good estimation in the Army, that this night our horsemen [who were] set to watch, to their seeming did see Lampes burne at the points of their staves or speares in the midst of these lightning flashes.

Again in North's "Plutarch," "Life of Julius Cæsar" as quoted in Porter and Clarke's edition of Julius Cæsar, p. 119:

Strabo the Philosopher writeth that divers men were seene going up and down in fire; and furthermore, that there was a slave of the soldiers that did cast a marvellous burning flame out of his hand; insomuch as they that saw it thought he had been burnt, but when the fire was out it was found he had no hurt.

Shakespeare has embodied this account of Plutarch's in his tragedy of Julius Cæsar, Act I., Scene 3, lines 15-25. See also Burritt's "Geography of the Heavens," revised edition, New York, 1859, p. 155, for a reference to a somewhat similar phenomenon as observed by Baccaria.

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