president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; Col. E. A. Stevens, of Castle Point; Hosea Webster, '82, of the Babcock & Wilcox Boiler Co.; H. M. Brinckerhoff, '90, president of the Alumni Association and electrical associate of Wm. Barclay Parsons; and E. H. Peabody, '90, of the Babcock & Wilcox Co., the toastmaster. President Humphreys announced that he had recently received $63,500 of the $1,250,000 which he expects to raise for the improvement and extension of the institute. This money is to be used for the purchase of the Castle Point estate, for the erection of several buildings, including a dormitory, a mechanical laboratory and an electrical laboratory, and to provide an adequate endowment fund.

The Minnseota *Alumni Weekly* states that President A. Ross Hill, of the University of Missouri, has notified the authorities of the University of Minnesota that he could not consider an offer of the presidency of the university.

R. D. Thomson, a graduate of Harvard University in the class of 1907, has been appointed instructor in electrical engineering in the University of Vermont.

Dr. H. Irving Eleshinger, associate in chemistry at the University of Chicago, has been appointed professor in the University of Pekin. Professor Oscar Eckstein, formerly instructor in chemistry in the University of Chicago, is director of the department of science.

Mr. A. J. Hebertson, reader in geography at Oxford University, has been appointed to a professorship of geography.

Mr. A. C. Seward, professor of botany at Cambridge University and a former fellow of St. John's College, has been elected to the professorial fellowship vacated by Mr. Bateson's resignation of the professorship of biology. Mr. Bateson has been made honorary fellow of the college.

At Oxford University Dr. Walter Ramsden, fellow of Pembroke; Dr. H. M. Vernon, fellow of Magdalen, and Mr. S. G. Scott, B.M., Magdalen, have been appointed demonstrators in physiology.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

ON THE SO-CALLED NORWOOD "METEORITE"

The issue of Science for January 28 contains an article by Professor Frank W. Very entitled "Fall of a Meteorite in Norwood, Massachusetts," descriptive of what he supposes to have been a meteoritic stone said to have fallen on the farm of Mr. W. P. Nickerson, of Norwood, Mass., during the night between October 7–8, 1909. On account of the specific character of the description and for fear that this may be successful in giving the "Norwood meteorite" a place in the literature, I feel that another opinion with regard to the character of the specimen should be placed on record.

I saw the newspaper account of this fall directly after its occurrence, and after correspondence with Mr. Nickerson took the first opportunity that presented itself to examine the specimen, which was then on exhibition in a "dime museum" in Boston. Mr. Nickerson himself met me there and showed me the stone. Professor Very's account of the appearance of the mass is sufficiently accurate, but his interpretation of it is entirely erroneous. As a matter of fact, the specimen is a characteristic glacial bowlder of a basic igneous dike rock, the matrix in which has been weathered so as to leave the characteristic large phenocrysts of plagioclase projecting from the surface. There is no surface indication whatever of flowage or of the skin which is characteristic of freshly fallen stony meteorites. I broke off a piece of the stone and examined the fresh fracture with the greatest care under a hand lens without finding any indication of the existence of metallic iron in the mass. Since reading Professor Very's article, I have had a thin section of my fragment made. Microscopic examination of this proves the rock to be ordinary labradorite-porphyry—a diagnosis which has been confirmed by Dr. H. S. Washington, who has called my attention to his description of this rock type from Essex County, Mass.[1]

Mr. Nickerson told me about the broken bars of the gateway under which the mass was

[1] *Journal of Geology*, Vol. 7, p. 290, 1899.

found and the other circumstances as related by Professor Very, but he added a statement with regard to a bright flash of light which he had noticed in the sky during the evening of October 7. His description, however, was only that of an unusually brilliant shooting star. A meteorite of the size of this specimen would surely have illuminated the region over many square miles with almost the light of day, judging from the reports of known meteorites which have been seen to fall, but no such occurrence was reported from Norwood. If the falling of a meteorite was the cause of the broken bars, the mass has not yet been found, or at any rate it was other than the specimen described by Professor Very and seen by me.

The circumstantial nature of the observations made by the several persons who had to do with digging up the "meteorite," as quoted in the article to which reference is made, are not as conclusive to me as they are to Professor Very, through scepticism engendered by the falsity of nearly all of the many reports that have come to my office during the past sixteen years in which people have described "meteorites" that they "had actually seen fall" at their feet or on the lawn in front of their houses, or in the road, or in some other very near-by place. On request, samples of some of these "meteorites" have been sent in, one of them proving to be a piece of fossiliferous limestone, another a bit of furnace slag, another a glacial bowlder of trap rock, another a glazed stone that had been used in the wall of a limekiln, another a glacial bowlder of quartzite covered with a film of limonite. The list might be extended almost indefinitely, but it is not worth while. In almost every case mentioned, the mass when found "was so hot that one could not bear his hand on it."

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A WORD OF EXPLANATION

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: May I trespass on your space for a word of explanation? A series of public lectures on human sense-organs recently delivered by me in Boston has given occasion to a number of newspaper reports. Most of these reports are entirely erroneous and misleading. None of them have been published with my sanction, but, on the contrary, quite against my wish. I am therefore not responsible for either their form or content.

G. H. PARKER

QUOTATIONS

THE SERVICE PENSION OF THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION

AN official action taken two months ago, but only now publicly announced, by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching seems to have certain ethical aspects that deserve consideration, not only from members of the teaching profession, but also from the public at large. Those aspects will, I think, become sufficiently apparent from a brief recital of the facts in the matter.

Upon its incorporation in 1906 the foundation announced that it would grant retiring allowances to teachers in accepted institutions upon two grounds—old age and length of service. The conditions relating to the old-age pension are not relevant to the present communication. The rule relating to service pensions reads as follows: "Any person who has had a service of twenty-five years as a professor, and who is at the time a professor in an accepted institution, shall be entitled to a retiring allowance"—computed in a specified manner. Between April, 1906, and November, 1909, many university teachers and many governing boards based definite plans and actions of their own upon the supposition that, so far as its resources extended, the Carnegie Foundation would do what it had announced that it would do. The expectation of a service pension was, in some cases, named among the inducements offered men who received calls to institutions upon the "accepted list" of the foundation; it was in other cases a motive for the refusal of otherwise advantageous calls to institutions not upon the foundation. In instances either known or reported to me, teachers nearing the time of eligibility for a service pension have in a great variety of ways altered their plans,