

in session at the University of Illinois on March 23 and 24. Those in attendance and the papers that they read at this conference were: Dean Davis, of Nebraska, "Incentives to Scholarships"; Dean Jones, of Missouri, "Systems of Grading"; Dean Hoffman, of Indiana, "What can be done for the Freshmen"; Dean Townsend, of Illinois, "Faculty Advisers"; Dean Reed, of Michigan, "What should be done with Large Classes"; Dean Downey, of Minnesota, "Group Requirements for the A.B. Degree"; Dean Greene, of Illinois, "The Future of the A.B. Degree"; Dean Templin, of Kansas, "The College and the Professional Schools"; Dean Birge, of Wisconsin, "The Building of a Faculty." Assistant Deans Rawles, of Indiana and Meyer, of Illinois, were also in attendance.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

HAVERFORD COLLEGE has completed the collection of a fund for pensions amounting to about \$150,000.

SIR FRANCIS GALTON has made a further donation of £500 for the maintenance of the Francis Galton Laboratory for the Study of National Eugenics in the University of London during the year 1911-12.

VIVIAN A. C. HENMON, A.B. (Bethany), Ph.D. (Columbia), now professor in the University of Colorado and dean, has been elected associate professor of educational psychology in the University of Wisconsin.

R. M. OGDEN, A.B. (Cornell), Ph.D. (Würzburg), has been promoted to a professorship of philosophy and psychology in the University of Tennessee.

DR. A. G. G. RICHARDSON has been elected professor of veterinary medicine of the Georgia State College of Agriculture. Dr. Richardson was in the United States Bureau of Animal Industry for a number of years.

DR. A. O. SHAKLEE, assistant in physiology and pharmacology of the Rockefeller Institute, has accepted the position of associate professor of pharmacology in the Philippine Medical School, Manila. Mr. Elbert Clark, associate

in anatomy in the University of Chicago and Rush Medical College, has been appointed assistant professor of anatomy at Manila.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM MOORE, of Cornell University, has received an appointment to a chair in the faculty of the British Agricultural College in the Transvaal.

SIR ALFRED KEOGH, K.C.B., who has been elected rector of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, retired last year from the post of director-general of the Army Medical Service.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

FRACASTORIUS, ATHANASIUS KIRCHER AND THE GERM THEORY OF DISEASE

IN SCIENCE for February 18, Dr. William A. Riley gives a clear and interesting account of the relation of Athanasius Kircher to the germ theory of disease. In connection with this paper it may be of moment to note that, as Osler has pointed out,¹ the true author of the germ theory is neither Kircher nor Hieronymus Mercurialis, but Fracastorius, a Veronese physician of the fifteenth century, whose chief title to fame has been hitherto that "most popular" of medical poems, if least savory in theme, "Syphilis, sive morbus gallicus" (1530). Geronimo Fracastorio, born in 1484, studied medicine at Padua, led a tranquil, easy life as physician and poet in the countryside near the Lago di Garda, and died in 1553. His work "De contagione et contagiosis morbis et curatione," published at Venice in 1546, contains the first scientific statement of the true nature of contagion, of infection, of disease germs and the modes of transmission of infectious diseases. The latter he divides into (1) diseases infecting by immediate contact (true contagions), (2) diseases infecting through intermediate agents like fomites, (3) diseases infecting at a distance or through the air, of which class he instances phthisis, the pestilential fevers, a certain kind of ophthalmia (conjunctivitis),

¹ *Proceedings of the Charaka Club*, New York, 1906, II., 8-11.