

ports as an argument for the exactness of chemical science. As a rule, however, the disagreements relate not so much to the observations as to their interpretation. Of course it is useless to expect investigators to agree upon the question as to whether or not formaldehyde is present in the plant, until they first can agree in regard to the tests for formaldehyde which shall be considered as conclusive. Again while this general subject is primarily a chemical one, yet many of the investigators have been men trained rather in other fields of work. It would seem that the chemist, or better, perhaps, the chemist and the botanist working conjointly, ought to be able to make surer progress in such investigations. The problem is an exceedingly complex one. Its solution involves many reactions at present but little understood—such as the nature of catalytic and enzymic action and the formation of asymmetric compounds. It is probable also that other forces not yet investigated may enter into the reactions by which these compounds are formed. Stewart<sup>57</sup> has even suggested that it is "not improbable that the rotation of the earth or terrestrial magnetism or the motion of the earth around the sun may have some effect." There is no doubt, however, but that progress is being made. It is also undoubtedly true that many of the researches now being carried on in our laboratories will be found to have a more or less direct bearing upon the general question; and it has been partly my object in discussing this topic to emphasize this fact in order that the results of our investigations, whenever applicable, may be directed towards the solution of this problem.

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<sup>57</sup> "Stereochemistry," London, 1907, p. 535.

#### THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

DR. HERMON C. BUMPUS has resigned the directorship of the American Museum of Natural History and has accepted the position of business manager to the University of Wisconsin. This announcement was made on January 20 by Mr. Seth Low, chairman of a special committee of the trustees appointed to consider the administration of the museum. He gave out the following statement:

Director Bumpus notified the trustees of the American Museum of Natural History at a special meeting held yesterday afternoon that he had accepted an appointment as business manager for the University of Wisconsin. Accordingly he presented his resignation as director, which was accepted. The administrative difficulty in the museum is thus terminated.

The questions raised as to the respective duty and authority of various officers in the museum seemed to the board important enough to be referred to a special committee, which was appointed on November 30, 1910, to give a hearing to the director and to consider his criticisms. The committee, which consisted of Anson W. Hard, Adrian Iselin, Jr., Percy R. Pyne, Felix M. Warburg and Seth Low (chairman), went into every criticism very thoroughly. They found nothing to justify the sweeping statements which had been made, and the specific criticisms of President Osborn, when sifted, were found to be either unimportant or not sustained. The committee and the board believes that the administration of President Osborn has been wise, efficient, far-sighted and public-spirited, and that the financial management has been sound and constructive.

#### THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

It was announced on January 20 that Mr. Andrew Carnegie had added \$10,000,000 to the endowment fund of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. The institution was established in 1902 with a gift of \$10,000,000, and Mr. Carnegie recently added \$2,000,000. These gifts consist of preferred bonds of the Steel Corporation bearing five per cent. interest and their market value is considerably above their par value. Mr. Carnegie's gifts to