

stimuli and a negative reaction to strong light, factors which may, in part, determine the nocturnal and hiding habits of this species. Unfortunately I was not favorably situated at the time for an extensive study of the habits and behavior of the animal, and it was, therefore, the next day preserved as a specimen.

On account of the rarity of this species in the northern part of its geographic range it seems that a brief description of this specimen is not amiss. The general color of the back can best be described as dark bluish olive-brown; the ventral parts, labials and neck-band (two scales wide) are salmon pink, being slightly darker postero-ventrally and slightly more yellowish on the supralabials and neck-band; a series of about 40 small black spots are scattered irregularly in a single midventral line from the 41st to the 144th ventral plates, being more numerous between the 86th and 144th ventral plates. The total length is 335 mm.; tail, 80 mm. The scutellation is as follows: dorsal scale rows, 15; ventrals, 156; subcaudals, 53; supralabials, 8-8; infralabials, 8-7; oculars, 2-2; temporals, 1-1.

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#### SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS MINUS SCIENCE

IN recent years the question has much occupied the public mind whether fraternities in schools and colleges are desirable or not. Those who favor the negative, often point to the low scholarship of the members of fraternities. The fraternities have reacted by strenuous efforts to raise the scholarship among their members. One of the national organizations recently offered a loving cup to that chapter in a group of universities of the Middle West which would make during the year the highest scholarship record. The national officers asked two members of the faculty of the University of Missouri to select the chapter. That ought to be easy. But it was found impossible. To make such an award, it is not sufficient to know that each chapter got so many A's, B's etc.; or so many 95's, 90's, etc., whatever the symbols may be in each institution. It is absolutely necessary

to know the frequencies of these grades in the whole student body of the institution. But none of these institutions, except one, could furnish these data, although, without the frequencies being known, their grades are practically meaningless. Here, then, we have institutions which are generally regarded as the representatives of science. But to apply science to the grades, of which they record year after year thousands, and without which they appear to be unable to get along, that does not seem to have occurred to the administrations of most of them. Their alumni look with amazement upon their *alma maters* which can not furnish the data for the solution of so simple and so proper a problem as that of awarding a loving cup to a group of students who have distinguished themselves by their scholarship.

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#### THE LANGUAGE OF THE BRAZILIAN PEOPLE

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Regarding the review of the work entitled "Fosseis Devonianos Do Paraná," published in the March 13 issue of SCIENCE by Dr. Chas. K. Swartz, Baltimore, Md., in the last paragraph where it mentions the work done by Dr. John M. Clarke, for the Department of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry (Geological and Mineralogical), I find a mistake in his stating that the work is published in the English and Spanish languages in parallel columns. Mr. Swartz should have said that it is published in Portuguese and English, the former being the universal language of the Brazilian people.

E. BRAGA

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#### QUOTATIONS

##### PROFESSORS IN COUNCIL

IN the circular letter that was sent out in the spring of 1913, looking to the formation of a national association of university professors, the motive actuating the signers was indicated in the statement that, besides his interest in his specialty, the university professor is "concerned, as a member of the legis-

lative body of his local institution, with many questions of educational policy which are of more than local significance"; also that "he is a member of a professional body which is the special custodian of certain ideals, and the organ for the performance of certain functions essential to the well-being of society." And the general purposes were declared to be "to promote a more general and methodical discussion of the educational problems of the university; to create means for the authoritative expression of the public opinion of the profession; and to make possible collective action, on occasions when such action seems called for." The letter was sent out by Johns Hopkins professors to members of the faculties of nine other universities, and the response was favorable in all cases; a conference on the subject was held last November; and now announcement is made of the names of a committee, representing the chief departments of learning and nearly all the leading universities of the country, whose task it will be to take the steps necessary for complete organization.

The distinctive feature of the American university is the part played by the president. Nothing even distantly resembling it exists, we believe, in any European country. That he is not the absolute monarch he is sometimes represented as being is true enough; but the limitations upon his power are often of the same nature as those which have as a general rule obtained in the case of what are usually designated as absolute monarchies in the history of nations. No university president thinks of setting up his personal will as the sole guide of his policy. Apart altogether from such check as may be exercised by the board of trustees, or other formal governing body, he usually consults the chief professors in any matter relating to their respective departments; and moreover there exists in every university some form or other of faculty organization. Nevertheless, the president, in most American universities, is the center of power, the chief fountain of favor and disfavor, of advancement or retardation; and his disposition towards any question, whether

relating to an individual or to a principle or a policy, usually has, or may have if he chooses, the controlling influence in its determination.

This feature of the American university system has been the subject of endless comment; but there exists alongside it, and somewhat resembling it in nature and effect, another feature that has attracted less notice. What goes on within any university is, in a certain sense, its own private affair; and it may easily happen that it is not the president, but one or more professors or professorial cliques, in whom real power rests, and by whom it is improperly exercised. Now there has not been developed in our country either any central organ—such as the Ministry of Public Instruction in European countries, for example—or any well-defined body of university tradition, to operate as a check upon any bad tendencies or unjust practises which may thus develop in any given institution. When such a state of things arises, whether the blame for it belongs to president or to professors, all that is apt to happen is a certain amount of grumbling, perhaps of indignation; it is only in extreme cases that there is likely to be any overt action. It may be that some professor is the victim of downright persecution; it may be that manageable mediocrity is systematically preferred to high ability which is somewhat more difficult to handle; it may be that independence of thought or freedom of speech is frowned upon and discouraged. Whatever the trouble may be, appeal is impossible to any but the little circle within the university itself, which is to all intents and purposes a close corporation.

That the new association may supply to the American university professor a basis for a wider and more catholic appeal in questions of moment, that it may become the means of promoting a professional spirit at once finer and stronger than that which has hitherto been general, must be the hope of all who are interested in the most truly distinctive service which universities render to a nation. Upon their immediate promotion of the general welfare, not only through the diffusion of intelligence and the improvement of education, but

also through efforts expressly directed to economic and social ends, emphasis has been laid in these latter days as never before. This tendency is bound to continue; and the benefits that will flow from our universities in these ways are quite beyond calculation. But it is not difficult to imagine these results obtained by other instrumentalities, if the institution we call the university were not historically in existence, and ready to furnish them. The thing that the university alone can supply—the thing, at all events, for which neither history nor imagination suggests a possible substitute—is the preservation of high intellectual ideals, the maintenance of noble traditions of science and learning. Of these ideals and traditions university presidents, however masterful, university administrators, however efficient, can not possibly serve as the custodians. It is upon the men whose business is not to administer but to teach and to learn, not to manage but to investigate and to inspire, that we must depend for the keeping alive of the sacred fire. And if we read aright the announcement of its purposes, it is to the strengthening of this conception of the professor's status that the new association is above all to be devoted.—New York *Evening Post*.

#### SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

*The Scientific Work of Morris Loeb.* Edited by THEODORE W. RICHARDS. Harvard University Press. 1913.

The many friends of Dr. Morris Loeb will feel very grateful to Professor Theodore W. Richards for arranging this volume. It is the best monument yet erected to the memory of a man whose life was an inspiration to all who knew him.

The first part of the volume is a collection of some lectures and addresses referring to chemical research, the Chemists' Club building, the chemical museum and kindred subjects. The great idealism of Dr. Morris Loeb, combined with his practical, well-organized methods and conceptions, are well illustrated by some passages:

Pages 95-96: "... How, then, can the

status of the independent commercial chemist be raised in our city? By giving him a central rally-point; a home that proves to the layman that his is a skilled profession, not a mere job-hunting trade; a place where the manufacturer or merchant can find the man he wants without a rambling search through the city directory. Doubtless, some of our colleagues are so well known that all the business comes to them which they can handle. But the many additional independent chemists, whom our commercial situation demands, can only establish themselves if they can secure proper laboratory facilities, without hiring attics in tumble-down rookeries. . . ."

Page 96: "... Every year scores of New Yorkers graduate in chemistry from our local institutions and return from years of protracted study in other American and European institutions. They are enthusiastic for research; in completing their theses they have laid aside definite ideas for subsequent experimentation; but they have no laboratory. While waiting to hear from the teachers' agency where they have registered, while carrying on desultory correspondence with manufacturers who *may* give them a chance, they do not venture upon expenditure of time and money to fit out a private laboratory, which they may be called upon to quit any minute upon the appearance of that desired appointment. Often necessity or tedium will cause them to accept temporary work of an entirely different character and indefinitely postpone the execution of the experiments which they had mapped out. Who will estimate the loss of scientific momentum, the economic and intellectual waste, which this lack of laboratory facilities for the graduate inflicts upon New York, as compared with Berlin, Vienna, Paris and London? Either our universities and colleges, or private enterprise, should provide temporary desk-room for the independent research chemist."

Pages 98-99-100: "... There is still another point, however, in which the American chemist is at a great disadvantage as compared with the European; the ease of securing material for his research and of comparing his