

three years, the great insurance corporation of Lloyds has reported that over 134,000 tons of shipping in which they were interested, had mysteriously disappeared, involving a loss of over \$13,000,000.

Whilst the first duty of the expedition will be to accurately chart the seas, the vessel will carry a staff of twelve scientific men, who will make a thorough investigation of all places visited, and in little known regions, parties will be left for short periods to carry on work in many branches of science. The expedition has been fortunate in enlisting the practical support of many governments, and after consultation with hydrographers in many parts of the world, the following itinerary has been agreed upon.

Leaving London in June, surveying work will be carried on in the North Atlantic, particularly in the vicinity of the sinking of the *Titanic*—where on three occasions a rock has been reported—thence down the Atlantic, after calling at several ports in this country, to the Panama Canal.

For the next four years investigations will be made in the Pacific Ocean, calling at most of the little known islands, and extending in its operations from the Sea of Okhotsk to King Edward VII. Land.

On leaving the Pacific, the expedition will continue its work amongst the islands of the East Indies thence to Zanzibar by way of Columbo, Seychelles and Mombasa. Later considerable time will be spent in the unknown waters south of Madagascar. After calling at Natal, the vessel will once more sail for Antarctic waters, and endeavor to find the coast line between Queen Mary Land and the Weddell Sea. On leaving these latitudes a thorough investigation will be made of the Sandwich Islands, which are at present unsurveyed. Continuing westward oceanographic work will be carried on around South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. From Port Stanley a line of soundings will be made to Montevideo, examining several shallow patches in the South Atlantic, and thence by way of Trinidad, Martin Vaz and Cape Verde Islands to London.

A FOSSIL BOTANICAL GARDEN

THE New York State Museum has received from Willard Lester, Esq., a deed of gift of about three acres of land in the town of Greenfield, two miles west of Saratoga Springs, which include the widely known "Cryptozoon Ledge," and this little property is set apart as a public geological park to be preserved and protected by the state because of its scientific interest.

The acquisition of this natural monument by free gift from a distinguished citizen of the state is not only the expression of a fine sentiment, but it brings under authoritative care a noteworthy natural phenomenon. The Cryptozoon is a marine calcareous alga which grew in great spherical bodies and in the Cambrian seas which deposited the limestones of this park, they were so abundant as to form extensive reefs. The Hoyt (Cambrian) limestone here forms a ledge which has been planed off by the ice sheet so that the Cryptozoa are smoothed down to a level surface and their interior structure beautifully displayed over an area of about a half acre. The gift, however, includes the extension of this ledge into other natural rock faces and abandoned workings of the old Hoyt quarry from which the geological formation takes its name.

The little property which is to be known as the "Lester Park" is of great natural beauty, both in itself and in its approaches, but not the least interesting thing about it is the fact that it is given to the state because of its geological and educational worth.

JOHN M. CLARKE

RECENT CHANGES IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BOSTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ON Wednesday evening, November 18, Professors H. L. Clark and Alexander McAdie addressed the first of the general meetings of the society which are being resumed this season. Dr. Clark spoke on New Australasian Echinoderms collected by S. S. *Endeavor* and Dr. McAdie spoke upon Exploring the Air. The interest shown by the large number of members present and the number of informal

discussions which took place afterward around the refreshment tables in the library augured well for the success of the new series of lectures.

It is the plan of the committee in charge to hold these gatherings on the first and third Wednesdays of each month until the middle of May. A large number of important communications have been promised by many officers of the various scientific establishments about Boston and Cambridge. Among these may be mentioned especially Professor M. L. Fernald who at the next meeting will speak upon the Flora of Block Island in Relation to that of Cape Cod. At the third meeting Professor Wallace W. Atwood will address the society on Mesa Verde, with remarks upon the ancient cliff dwellings in that region. Papers have also been promised by Professor W. M. Davis, on his recent researches on the Reefs of the South Pacific, by Professors J. B. Woodworth, P. E. Raymond, R. A. Daly, C. T. Brues, G. H. Parker, R. T. Jackson, H. W. Shimer, C. Palache, as well as by Dr. H. B. Bigelow and Mr. C. W. Johnson, the curator of the society's museum.

Many changes have been made in the Museum building since the lectures were discontinued five years ago. The lecture hall has been completely renovated and reequipped throughout, so that it is now an attractive and cheerful meeting place. Even greater changes may be seen in the other parts of the building. The museum has definitely decided to lay special emphasis on exhibits of New England natural history and with this end in view has entered into a scheme of cooperation with the University Museum in Cambridge. The long unused collections of foreign material are being sent there and the space devoted to exhibits of modern groups of New England mammals and birds. The other branches of New England natural history are also being appropriately displayed.

THE PROPOSED TORONTO MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

THE University of Toronto and the scientific men of the city had extended a cordial

invitation to the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Affiliated Societies to meet in Toronto a year hence. The circumstances which will make this impossible are explained in the following letters, addressed to Dr. L. O. Howard, permanent secretary of the association. Dr. Robert W. Falconer, president of the university, writes:

I have had a meeting of the committee which the university appointed to make arrangements for the reception of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which accepted our invitation to meet here a year ago from next December. Our committee had been intending to use every effort to make the meeting a highly successful one, and we were hoping to create a widespread interest in the association. However, the outbreak of this terrible war has made an entirely new situation. At present the war hangs over us like a cloud so heavily that it would be very hard indeed for us to arouse interest in a scientific meeting. Also, the financial situation is anything but promising. We can not hazard any conjecture as to the length of the war, though we are making preparations on the assumption that it may last for another year at least. What condition we shall be in then no one can tell. Our committee thought that it was only right that I should thus place our conditions before you at this early stage on the chance that you might be able to change the place of meeting and come to us later, at a time when we shall be able to give you a welcome that we would be anxious to accord the association.

Professor J. C. Fields writes on behalf of the local committee:

At a meeting of the local executive committee we had an extended discussion on the prospects of the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science to which we folks up here were all looking forward with so much interest. In view of the conditions already induced by the war and the uncertainty of the future it was the general disappointed sense of the members that we might not be in a position to arouse sufficient local interest or otherwise be able to assure such a success as we should wish for the meeting. Here everything is disorganized by the war and its issues overshadow everything else. Students and members of the faculty are drilling and many are likely to go to the front, so that we hardly know what will be the position of affairs here by this time next year. The members of the committee