there at the beginning of the next academic year. Dr. William S. Foster, now instructor in psychology in Cornell University, has been made assistant professor of education.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

THE ORIGIN OF PACIFIC ISLAND FAUNAS

To the Editor of Science: In the current number of Science (April 14) I read with interest the abstract of a paper by Dr. Pilsbry on the land shells of the Pacific islands as a guide to former geographic conditions. The author rejects "the hypothesis that Pacific snails reached the islands by oversea drift" because it "leaves the absence of higher snails unexplained."

It is perhaps dangerous to criticize an argument from an abstract, but as this point has been cited in other cases where I know it involved a fallacy, I venture to suggest that Doctor Pilsbry may also have overlooked the fact that the older a given group is the longer time there has been for the chances of oversea dispersal, hence the greater the probability of its reaching the more remote islands. Obviously a group which has not become dominant until the later Tertiary has but a very small chance of having reached remote islands as compared with a group that was dominant during the Mesozoic or earlier. Certain features in the Mesozoic and early Tertiary climates would tend to increase greatly the chances of oversea transport, and a third explanation might be cited in the differences of habitat which would tend to facilitate the drift dispersal of some types more than others. That the higher types should be found in the larger islands and those nearer to the continental platforms is quite to be expected; and by the law of chances, where only a limited number of primary stocks of the more ancient groups have reached the more distant islands, one ought not to expect to find any of the groups of comparatively recent dominance.

With many if not most groups of land invertebrates, as with the land vertebrates, the evolution and dispersal of the modern dominant fauna took place during the Tertiary, and much of it I suspect rather late in the Tertiary. But, as also with vertebrates, the wide oceanic dispersal of the older or lower groups may be due more to their greater facilities for dispersal than to their greater antiquity.

W. D. Matthew

BELGIAN HARE, A MISLEADING MISNOMER

In a paper entitled "Anatomical Adaptations in the Thoracic Limbs of the California Pocket Gopher and Other Rodents,"[1] Charles Daniel Holliger has identified the so-called Belgian hare as *Lepus europaeus* (p. 449). At various places in the text and particularly in the last paragraph of the summary (p. 489) he comes to the conclusion that "domestication reduces specialization" and that "the typical cursorial modifications [of the Jack rabbit] have either disappeared or have been much reduced in the Belgian hare."

As a matter of fact the "Belgian hare" is a domestic variety of the European rabbit and the striking differences observed by Holliger are due to inherent generic differences, the Jack rabbit belonging to the genus *Lepus* and the European rabbit and with it the Belgian hare belonging to the rather conspicuously different genus *Oryctolagus*.[2] Or to put it the other way around, the striking differences observed by Holliger (see especially table p. 487) are part of those on which the genera *Lepus* and *Oryctolagus* are founded.

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THE VAPOR PRESSURE OF SOLUTIONS

In Science of January 14 last Arthur Tabor Jones describes an apparatus for observing the change in the volume of solutions in the presence of the solvent owing to the difference in the vapor pressures. He could not determine the rate of change owing to the roughness of the bell jar. The following apparatus has

[1] *Univ. Calif. Publ.*, Vol. 13, pp. 447–497, March 7, 1916.

[2] See Lyon, *Smiths. Miscell. Coll.*, Vol. 45, pp. 323, 406, pl. 98, June 15, 1904; and Miller, Cat. Museum West. Europe Brit. Mus., p. 485, November 23, 1912.