

Thursday, March 29. "The Period of Philosophical Speculation. Theories of Evolution and Arithmetic."

Saturday, March 31. "The Shift to Experimental Methods. Aristotle, the Naturalist, the Astronomer and the Physicist."

Monday, April 2. "The Great Lights of Ancient Science: Archimedes and Hipparchus."

THE third Guthrie lecture of the Physical Society, London, was given on March 23, by Professor P. Langevin, on "Molecular Orientation."

JONATHAN RISSE, professor of zoology at Washburn College and previously assistant professor at Beloit College, died on March 23, aged forty-eight years.

DAVID H. BROWNE, a metallurgical engineer living at Montclair, N. J., known for his work in copper smelting, died on March 30, at the age of fifty-three years.

DR. E. P. RAMSAY, curator for many years of the Australian Museum, Sydney, author of works on ornithology, has died at the age of seventy-four years.

THE death is announced, in his ninety-second year, of James Forrest, honorary secretary, and for many years the secretary, of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

GENERAL J. A. L. BASSOT, the distinguished French geodesist, has died at the age of seventy-six years.

AMONG New York State civil service examinations to be held on May 5, are examinations for the position of assistant bacteriologist in the State Department of Health, with salaries of \$900 to \$1,800.

THE annual meetings of the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists and of the American Association of Immunologists is being held in New York City on April 6 and 7, under the presidency of Dr. Richard Weil. The sessions will be held at the New York Academy of Medicine and at the Rockefeller Institute.

THE Peabody Museum of Yale University, which for forty years has housed the Marsh collection of fossils, the Gibbs mineralogical collection, for which citizens of the city and

Yale paid \$20,000 almost a hundred years ago that it might not go to the city of Hartford, and other collections of more recent date, closed its doors to the public last week. With the razing of this old natural history museum will pass out of existence the building that has been the college home of many distinguished members of the Yale faculty, including James Dwight Dana, Othniel Charles Marsh, Addison E. Verrill, Sidney I. Smith and George Jarvis Brush. Visitors will have no opportunity to see the university's collections in natural history until the new museum on the Sage-Pearson plot is finished.

#### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

At the Charter Day exercises of the University of California on March 23, President Benj. Ide Wheeler announced that the gifts of the previous twelve months amounted to approximately half a million dollars, among the principal items being the \$70,000 given by Professor and Mrs. George Holmen Howison to endow a fellowship in philosophy, scholarships in English, etc.; \$200,000 provided by the late Mrs. Elizabeth Josselyn Boalt to endow instruction in the school of jurisprudence; \$43,493 given by various friends of the university to furnish and equip the new University Hospital in San Francisco, a 215-bed teaching hospital, itself built through gifts of \$586,000 from a number of different benefactors, and \$80,000 expended during the year by the gift of Miss Ellen B. Scripps, for a new thousand-foot concrete pier, a new library and museum building, etc., for the Scripps Institution for Biological Research at La Jolla.

MR. CHARLES W. BINGHAM (Yale, '68), of Cleveland, Ohio, has given \$10,000 to Yale University for the endowment of scholarships to be awarded to graduates of the high schools of Cleveland and its vicinity entering the college or the scientific school.

ALL SOULS COLLEGE, Oxford, has given the university fifteen hundred pounds in aid of the general fund and the like sum for the Bodleian Library.

DR. CHARLES A. MANN, of the University of Wisconsin, has been appointed associate professor of chemical engineering at Iowa State College, to succeed Professor George A. Gabriel, who has resigned to undertake industrial work.

AT Yale University Samuel James Record, at present an assistant professor in the Forestry School, has been elected professor of forest products, and Assistant Professor Ralph Chipman Hawley has been promoted to a full professorship of forestry.

HOWARD LILIETHAL, M.D., (Harvard, '87), has been appointed professor of clinical surgery in the Cornell University Medical School.

MR. E. D. MERRILL, botanist in the Bureau of Science, Manila, and for the last four years associate professor of botany in the University of the Philippines and head of the department, has been promoted to the full professorship. His services will be divided between the university and the Bureau of Science as in the past.

THE resignation of Dr. E. A. Letts from the chair of chemistry in the Queen's University, Belfast, is announced.

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

### EPICENE PROFILES IN DESERT LANDS

IN the genetic analysis of the land forms characteristic of arid regions there seems to be an inexplicable proneness to derive all relief effects not through means of the mastering erosive powers peculiarly dependent upon aridity but through the operation of the same geologic processes which produce the landscape features under conditions of normal humid climate. This far too general tendency to regard all geographic agencies as differing merely in degree and not in kind inevitably leads to erroneous conclusions concerning the origin of many relief details. Although in the instance of desert lands there are not only more but different erosional agencies to be taken into account there is actually less complexity involved than in moist lands. On the other hand while there is still the simultaneous working of several distinct processes a

little-known one becomes dominant and so thoroughly ascendant as to all but completely obscure the operations of the others. To this aspect of the desert problems little attention has been heretofore devoted.

Although this exceptional simplicity of landscape derivation obtains in typically desert tracts it appears to be not nearly so prevalent either on the borders of the desert or in the penumbral semi-arid belts. In the last mentioned situation there is a notable mingling of relief effects produced by the action of several distinct erosional processes. Here recorded observation chances to be most extensive and generalization most rampant. Here, too, because of the fact that the examination of the features is attended by strong bias of moist climate experience misinterpretation of true desert characters is rife.

By inference, at least, use of the title "Epicene Profiles" applied to arid tracts, presupposes the recognition of other relief effects. The orogenic profile which has been so long inseparably associated with desert topography is at once relegated to the back-ground. By its elimination a diametrically opposed proposition is substituted for that most brilliant of geological concepts—the fault-block hypothesis of basin range structure whereby the mountain prisms are tilting and floating as do ice-cakes in a river at time of spring break-up.

The early impression that desert ranges, as those of the Great Basin for instance, are buried mountains still strongly persists. But there are many phenomena in such regions that water-action does not begin to explain. The rock-floor which many intermont basins display is one of them. The smooth plains surface of enisled landscapes at once excites greatest interest. To find such tracts areas of profound degradation instead of extensive aggradation, as one is led to expect after accepting the water-action hypothesis, is truly surprising. Whether desert tracts of this description owe their facial expression mainly to pre-arid corrasion by streams all traces of which have long since vanished, whether the sloping intermont plains are the result of sheet-flood erosion, or, as is still more lately proposed, the rock-floor of desert piedmonts is due to