It would be interesting in this connection to analyze the counts by months of sunspots through several cycles to find whether there is any evidence of a short-period variation of this length, no matter how small. I hope to be able to do this within the next few months.

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SOME MICRO-PLANKTON FROM SALTON SEA

As is generally known Salton Sea is a body of water covering a part of the Imperial Valley in southern California which is 230 feet below sea level, and it is formed by overflow of flood waters, or by waters diverted for irrigation, from the delta of the Colorado River.

On December 16, 1919, Captain W. C. Crandall, of the Scripps Institution for Biological Research of the University of California, Dr. H. C. Bryant, of the California State Fish and Game Commission, and of the museum of vertebrate zoology of the University of California, and Dr. Will F. Thompson, of the California State Fish and Game Commission, started over the recently completed San Diego and Arizona railroad for a four days' biological investigation of Salton Sea.

Captain Crandall made a few plankton catches in Salton Sea and secured a number of water samples, temperatures, etc., besides making some rough physiographic observations. Dr. Bryant found about fifty different kinds of birds. Dr. Thompson's fishing equipment did not get through so he was not able to make the expected studies of fish. It was found, however, that Salton Sea is regularly fished for mullet which reach large size and are found in commercial quantities at present.

Four hauls were made for microplankton in Salton Sea with a fine (Number 25) silk net such as has been in use for some time for marine work. The catches thus made were purely qualitative and were taken at the surface under adverse conditions. One catch indicated a rather abundant microplankton. Catches made at other points showed very little. The presence of the following organisms was noted in a hasty examination of the catches: *Keratella quadrata* (Müller), *Brachionus pala* Ehr., (most of these had female eggs attached), *Anabœna* sp., *Oscillatoria* sp., *Cœlastrum* sp., *Amphiprora alata* Kuetz., *Fragillaria crotonensis* Kitton, *Navicula* sp., and *Surirella* sp.

Physiographic features of Salton Sea are very remarkable. There has been a fairly constant reduction of level at the rate of about one foot per year for some years. Consequent recession of the water has left exposed numerous mud geysers, hot and cold springs, various types of mineral springs and some excellent paint pigments almost ready for use. In the sea itself, near the mouths of its tributaries, it is notable that the water is in two layers, the heavy saline water below and the relatively fresh above. It thus resembles ocean conditions near tributaries.

The primary purpose of this memorandum is to call general attention to the fact that the Salton Sea locality offers extraordinary favorable conditions for continuous studies throughout the year in the lines of physiography, hydrography and biology. Since the microplankton is the biological group which gives the clearest index to biological conditions in water, it would be especially desirable to have that particular phase of biological study carried on. There is probably no other body of water in the world so favorably situated and conditioned for segregation and evaluation of major factors involved. It would be most fortunate for the progress of science in general if a biological station could be established in this region and its work assisted by that of a competent physiographer and hydrographer.

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CONDITIONS IN HUNGARY

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have just received a letter from a professor in Hungary, which should, I think, be shared with the readers of SCIENCE. The writer is one of the leading scholars in that country in his department, and with him for many years prior to the war I have had a most pleasant acquaintance. I know that only real suffering

on the part of his friends and himself could have induced him to write this letter, from which I take the following extracts:

. . . "The middle classes are suffering frightfully in the present depreciation of money. Our salaries (which are for the present being paid) seem high according to the figures, but they are insufficient for the purchase of even the ordinary necessities of life. We may, for instance, possibly once a week have a bit of meat, but for the rest of the time we have to rejoice if we can get enough bad bread and vegetables to appease hunger. Sugar is enormously dear and never to be had in sufficient quantities. Clothing we can not buy, for a single simple suit would cost more than a month's salary. It is the same with underclothes and shoes. What our present conditions will lead to in the near future it is impossible to conceive."

. . . "You can imagine it is in the highest degree painful for me to write you such a letter, and only real suffering would justify it."

. . . "While we are suffering in Austria from actual need of food, packages of food sent by individuals in America rarely reach their destination. Money is practically of no value, for there is little food to be purchased with it."

Professor ————, whose name I withhold, writes that the American Relief Administration (whose office in this country is at 115 Broadway, New York), has established an American food warehouse in Vienna, from which food is distributed that has been shipped from this country.

Jas. Lewis Howe

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JOURNALS FOR PRAGUE

To the Editor of Science: Dr. M. Kojima, surgeon-commander, Japanese Navy, has but now arrived from Tchecho-Slovak where he visited Professor A. Biedl. The latter has sent through him a message to American scientists asking if they can arrange to have sent to him the various scientific publications and periodicals, since he is unable to purchase the same on account of the rate of exchange, lack of funds, and general disturbed conditions in Tchecho-Slovak. It seems to me that the least we can do is to arrange through our editing boards some procedure by which Dr. Biedl may receive current numbers of our scientific periodicals. I would appreciate greatly your giving this communication publicity in "Science." Dr. Biedl's address is Das Institute fur Experimentelle Pathologie, Prag, Tchecho-Slovak.

Frederick S. Hammett

NOTES ON METEOROLOGY

THE SUPPOSED RECURRENT IRREGULARITIES IN THE ANNUAL MARCH OF TEMPERATURE

"The belief that periods of unseasonable heat and cold tend to recur at or about the same time from year to year has prevailed over a great part of the world for many centuries and has been the subject of extensive scientific investigation." This is the opening sentence in an extensive, scholarly discussion of the "Literature concerning supposed recurrent irregularities in the annual March of temperature," by C. Fitzhugh Talman, librarian of the Weather Bureau.[6]

Most of the literature deals with a cold period in May.

> Over a considerable part of continental Europe it has been popularly believed since the Middle Ages that destructive frosts were likely to occur at a certain period in the month of May, and with the elaboration of the ecclesiastical calendar these frosts became definitely associated with the days dedicated to Saints Mamertus, Pancras and Servatius (May 11, 12, 13), or, in south-central Europe, Saints Pancras, Servatius and Boniface (May 12, 13, 14), hence known as the "ice saints." . . . With the construction of synoptic weather charts, the barometric conditions that accompany depressions of temperature gradually became apparent. . . . [This cold period] was found to occur when, owing to the rapid warming of the land regions as compared with the ocean, a center of low barometric pressure develops over southeastern Europe while high pressure prevails over the ocean

[6] *Monthly Weather Review*, August, 1919, Vol. 47, pp. 555–565.