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CONTENTS

<i>The Temperature Interval in the Geographical Distribution of Marine Algæ: PROFESSOR WILLIAM ALBERT SETCHELL</i>	187
<i>A Third Capture on the Florida Coast of the Whale Shark, Rhineodon typus: DR. E. W. GUDGER</i>	191
<i>Scientific Events:—</i>	
<i>The Spawning Grounds of the Eel; Agricultural Work at the University of Nanking; All-America Conference on Venereal Diseases; Dye Division of the American Chemical Society; The Federated American Engineering Societies</i>	192
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	195
<i>University and Educational News</i>	197
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>Methods used in the Study of Soil Alkali: DR. F. S. HARRIS. The Rôle of Psychological Factors in Digestion: DR. J. R. KANTOR. A Sidewalk Mirage: DR. F. W. MCNAIR</i>	198
<i>Scientific Books:—</i>	
<i>Dean on Helmets and Body Armor in Modern Warfare: DWIGHT FRANKLIN</i>	201
<i>Special Articles:—</i>	
<i>Decomposition of Hydrogen Peroxide by Organic Compounds and its Bearing on the Catalase Reaction: DRs. SERGIUS MORGULUS AND VICTOR E. LEVINE. Device showing effect on the Potential Difference between the Terminals of an Electric Cell when the Circuit is closed: DR. NORTON A. KENT</i>	202
<i>The American Meteorological Society: DR. CHARLES F. BROOKS</i>	295
<i>The American Chemical Society: DR. CHARLES S. PARSONS</i>	206

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THE TEMPERATURE INTERVAL IN THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF MARINE ALGÆ¹

THE idea of geographical distribution came as a new and inspiring, although rather indefinite, concept to the German fathers of botany in the latter portion of the fifteenth and earlier portion of the sixteenth centuries. The attempt to explain geographical distribution according to the influence of environmental factors began, practically, with Alexander von Humboldt in 1805. Since his time, temperature has generally been regarded as the chief limiting factor in climatic distribution. In 1893, I called attention to the relationship existing between the position of the isotherms (mean maxima for the hottest month) of 10°, 15°, 20°, and 25° C. of the surface waters of the oceans and the limits of distribution of certain groups of kelps (Laminariaceæ). In 1894, and again in 1898, C. Hart Merriam proposed dividing the United States into certain "life-zones" or "crop-zones" according to the "summation-indices" of the temperature of the frostless season and showed the close relation of the boundary lines of these "zones," or belts as they may be more distinctly designated, to the isotherms (isotherms of mean maxima for the six hottest weeks of the season) of 18°, 22°, and 26° C. In 1913, Livingston and Livingston proposed a series of "efficiency indices" for use in plant distribution and climatology, presumably resting upon more of a physiological basis than the summations of temperature or statistical relations to various isotherms. The efficiency basis of their system is founded upon the application of the van't Hoff-Arrhenius principle as to the velocity of vital activities at different temperatures. In

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