laurin, formerly president. Reginald H. Smithwick, of Boston, president of the senior class and chairman of the Institute Committee, placed a wreath on the memorial which has been erected in memory of Dr. Maclaurin in the lobby of the Walker Memorial building.

We learn from the *Journal* of the Washington Academy of Sciences that Mr. Ralph W. Howell, geologist with the U. S. Geological Survey, was killed by native raiders in Beluchistan in the latter part of November, 1920. He was engaged at the time in oil exploratory work for Pearson & Son, of London, and was working near the Beluchistan-Punjab border in an area that had been considered safe from bandits. Mr. Howell was born in 1886, and had been a member of the Survey staff since 1913. He was granted leave of absence from the survey in October, 1919, to engage in private work.

On December 21, at a conference between representatives of the Department of Commerce and the Department of Agriculture held in the office of the secretary of commerce, the Bureau of Chemistry of the Department of Agriculture made known its willingness to withdraw from future investigations of fishery products, and at the same time agreed to ask Congress to transfer to the Bureau of Fisheries the item for fish investigations included in the pending estimates for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1921.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

The faculty of Mount Holyoke College has voted to raise a fund of $100,000 to endow the president's chair in recognition of Miss Mary E. Woolley's twenty years' service as president of Mount Holyoke.

The first Congress of the Universities of the British Empire was held in London in 1912 when all, to the number of fifty-three, were represented. It was decided to hold the congresses every five years, but the war made it impossible to do so in 1917. The second congress will accordingly be held in the summer of 1921. The number of British universities has in the meantime increased to fifty-eight.

Professor Eugene Taylor, of the University of Wisconsin, has been appointed head of the department of mathematics at the University of Idaho.

Doak B. Carrick has been elected professor of pomology, and Arno H. Nehrling assistant professor of floriculture in the college of agriculture, Cornell University.

Professor Edwin T. Hodge, head of the department of mining geology in the University of British Columbia, has joined the department of geology of the University of Oregon.

The *Bulletin* of the American Mathematical Society states that in the faculty of sciences of the University of Paris, the following changes have been made: Dr. Emile Borel, professor of the theory of functions, has been appointed professor of the calculus of probabilities and mathematical physics, as successor to Professor B. J. Boussinesq, who has retired; Dr. Paul Painlevé, professor of rational mechanics, has been appointed professor of analytical and celestial mechanics, as successor to Professor Paul Appell; Professor Elie Cartan succeeds Professor Painlevé in the chair of rational mechanics, and Professor Ernest Vessiot, recently appointed assistant director of the Ecole normale supérieure, succeeds Professor Cartan in the chair of the differential calculus; Dr. J. Drach has been appointed professor of general mathematics, and Dr. Paul Montel maître de conférences in mathematics.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

A METEOR FALL IN THE ATLANTIC

It may be of interest to put on record the subjoined account of a fall of meteorites, that was reported in the *New York Times*, of November 5, 1906, a clipping from which paper I have just come across. The fall was observed from the Phoenix Line steamship "St. Andrew," en route from Antwerp to New York, on October 30, 1906, "about 600 miles northeast of Cape Race." The more

important parts of an interview with Chief Officer V. E. Spencer are here given.

On Tuesday (October 30) afternoon the weather was clear and bright, although there was little sunshine. Just after one bell, 4.30 o'clock, I saw three meteors fall into the water dead ahead of the ship, one after another at a distance of about five miles. Although it was daylight they left a red streak in the air from zenith to the horizon.

Simultaneously the third engineer shouted to me. I then saw a huge meteorite on the port beam falling in a zigzag manner less than a mile away to the southward. We could distinctly hear the hissing of the water as it touched. It fell with a rocking motion, leaving a broad red streak in its wake. The meteor must have weighed several tons, and appeared to be from 10 to 15 feet in diameter. It was saucer-shaped, which probably accounted for the peculiar rocking motion.

When the mass of metal struck the water the spray and steam rose to a height of at least forty feet, and for a few moments looked like the mouth on a crater. If it had been night the meteor would have illuminated the sea for fifty or sixty miles. The hissing sound, like escaping steam, when it struck the water, was so loud that the Chief Engineer turned out of his berth and came on deck, thinking the sound came from the engine room.

Captain Russ, of the Hamburg-American steamer *Brazilia*, which arrived about the same time as the *St. Andrew*, reported having seen a large meteor at 7 P.M. on October 30, in Lat. 47° N., and Lon. 48°W. This is believed to have been a part of the intermittent meteoric shower observed by the *St. Andrew* earlier in the evening.

In this account, by an intelligent observer, and one presumably fitted by training and profession to observe rapidly, some points of special interest may be noted: the peltoid form, zigzag path, and rocking motion, it being noteworthy that the irregular path was maintained in spite of the very large size (probably overestimated) and great weight; the probably constant general orientation, ("Brustseite"); the brilliant light, though it is not stated whether this came from the meteor or from its track; the loudness of the hissing sound when it struck the water, sufficient to rouse the Chief Engineer a mile away. One is inclined to think that the meteorites were siderolites. It is, of course, purely conjectural whether the meteor reported by the *Brazilia* belonged to the *St. Andrew* shower; the difference in time would seem to be incompatible with this supposition, which may be put down to a reporter's love of the sensational.

HENRY S. WASHINGTON
GEOPHYSICAL LABORATORY,
CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

MUSICAL NOTATION

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In the September number of *The Scientific Monthly* Professor E. V. Huntington describes a new way of writing music, which for simplicity and clearness can hardly be surpassed. It consists in using the ordinary staff for the twelve notes of the tempered chromatic scale, instead of (as now done) for the seven notes of the diatonic scale. This new "normalized" notation does away with all sharps and flats. Since there are just twelve lines and spaces (including the added line below) in each staff, each letter will have always the same position on the staff, whether soprano, alto, tenor or bass. It is hoped that teachers will take advantage of the normalized notation to smooth out the road for beginners, particularly in the grade schools.

There is another unnecessary musical difficulty in the way of piano students, which can be easily removed. The pupil must now become familiar with twelve different modes of fingering, one for each of the twelve possible keynotes. This means that for the average pupil so much practise is required in order to become reasonably expert at the piano that he or she becomes discouraged. In any case a great deal of time is wasted in practising the twelve sets of finger exercises.

A very slight change in the keyboard will reduce the sets of fingering from twelve to two. The change consists in having six white keys and six black (instead of seven white and five black) in each octave. The key C, which would then be black, should be fluted or corrugated on its upper surface, so as to be easily recognizable both by sight and