year now expended by the hospital and medical school for running expenses, and providing a building fund of $1,000,000.

DR. LEE I. KNIGHT, of the department of botany, University of Minnesota, has been appointed chairman of that department.

DR. HARRY F. LEWIS, A.B. and A.M., Wesleyan University, and Ph.D., Tilden, Illinois, has been elected associate professor in chemistry at Cornell College.

DR. JOSEPH L. MAYER, chief chemist of the research and analytical laboratories of the Louis K. Liggett Co., New York, has been appointed professor of analytical and pharmaceutical chemistry in the Brooklyn College of Pharmacy where he has been associate professor of analytical chemistry for several years.

S. C. OGBURN, JR., graduate of the University of North Carolina, has been appointed instructor in chemistry at Washington and Lee University.

JAMES L. HOWE, JR., who has been for three years assistant professor of chemistry in Washington and Lee University, has accepted the professorship of chemistry in Hangchow Christian College, China.

H. P. PHILPOT, assistant professor at University College, London, has been appointed to the professorship of civil and mechanical engineering at the Finsbury Technical College; and A. J. Hale, chief assistant in the department of applied chemistry, has been appointed to the professorship in that department.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

THE CHERT PITS AT COXSACKIE, N. Y.

A REMARKABLE series of chert pits and two large quarries two miles south of Coxsackie, N. Y., is being examined by the archeological staff of the State Museum of New York under the leadership of State Archeologist Arthur C. Parker.

These pits are on the property of the West Shore Railroad and cover the greater portion of an elongate hill a mile in length and some one thousand feet in width. The hill is covered with the refuse of aboriginal excavations. The steep slopes are covered in places to a depth of six or more feet with the rock broken from the pits and quarries. One immense dump is more than a hundred feet long and eight feet in thickness and contains besides the waste rock the rejected blocks of flint and many broken or partially completed implements. Broken rock occurs in such quantities that the railroad purchased the property thinking it an enormous bed of broken stone suitable for road bed ballast.

Mr. Parker is making a survey of the hill in order to make a relief model of it for a museum exhibit. The artificial nature of the broken stone was discovered by Mr. Jefferson Ray, of West Coxsackie, who made a collection of 1,500 chipped chert implements from the workshop sites on the flats below the hill.

The site is an exceedingly old one and must have been worked by three or four hundred Indians at a time for a period of 500 to 1000 years, judging from the large quantities of flint found upon it. The site is a remarkable one and is a unique archeological monument that will well repay visitation by archeologists and geologists interested in securing data bearing on the stone age.

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THE USE OF AGAR IN FACILITATING THE REMOVAL OF A SWALLOWED FOREIGN OBJECT

OPPORTUNITY of experimentation and observation in the use of agar in assisting in the removal of a foreign object from the stomach came to the writer in the case of a child, four and one half years old, who had swallowed a safety pin. The pin was an ordinary nickeled pin, one and one half inches long, and was closed.

According to the best medical practise the use of purgatives or cathartics in such emergency is to be avoided, as such would tend to liquefy and remove the bowel content leaving the object unsupported; and moreover any

purgative acting by irritation of the bowels might cause such peristalsis as to allow the pin to become caught in the contracting action in such a manner as to become permanently imbedded. The removal by natural action is deemed best, aided by the feeding of much bulky food to stimulate natural peristaltic action, and to form encasement for the foreign object.

In accordance with these principles the child was induced to eat as much bulk-forming food as possible, as shredded wheat, oatmeal, bread and milk, potatoes, carrots, spinach and celery. Milk was allowed after the appetite had become satiated with the solid food.

In order to make more certain the removal of the object, as well as to hasten the action, it was conceived that the addition of agar to the diet would be highly beneficial. Since agar is not digested and swells to several times its bulk its effect would be not only to hasten peristalic action by natural stimulation, but its added bulk would assist in encasing the object and in carrying it along. It was reasoned that its effect would be of especial value in those portions of the digestive tract in which the digestible food is in the state of emulsification.

At evening and morning meals therefore, there was added to a little of the prepared cereal, three heaping teaspoonfuls of chocolate-coated granular agar. This was eaten by the child readily and with relish.

As the child tended somewhat toward constipation, the removal of the previous fecal matter was hastened by the use of a glycerol suppository. The later actions were wholly normal. The first feeding occurred in the evening, soon after the swallowing of the object. Bowel action occurred as follows: 16 hours, 23 hours, 40 hours, at which time the pin appeared. The stools were copious and of a moist, compact, firm structure—an ideal consistency to carry a foreign object. As bowel action occurred twice daily, instead of the usual once; and as the bulk of each was at least twice normal; it is evident that the bowel content had been increased by fourfold, due in a large measure to the agar.

It is not to be supposed that the safe removal of the object was due wholly to the agar, though this probably at least hastened its removal. As the experiment was wholly satisfactory however it would lead to the recommendation of the use of agar for this purpose. In the case of the removal of objects more dangerous, or more difficult of removal, it might prove a decisive factor.

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AN INCONSISTENCY IN TAXONOMY

In the classification of animals we are often very inconsistent in the use and evaluation of characters as we apply them to different groups. This is more apparent between widely separated groups than closely related ones. Thus in the subgroups in one class of the vertebrates, osteological or other anatomical characters may be largely used, while in another class such internal characters may be almost entirely subordinated to external ones. Sometimes, to be sure, certain characters have not the same value in one class that they have in another, but the main reason for the inconsistency lies in the less skilful or less thorough handling of one group as compared with another. The truth is, classification became unfashionable long before the groups, especially the larger ones, were well formulated. Among groups as small as genera there are probably few cases so extreme as the following.

There are two genera of sharks, *Mustelus* and *Cynias,* that are strikingly similar in all external characters. We refer them to different genera because they differ in regard to a modification of the yolk sac in the young. In *Mustelus* the yolk sac is modified to function as a placenta by which the young forms a connection with the walls of the mullerian duct of the mother. This so-called placenta is absent in *Cynias,* or, more correctly speaking, the yolk sac is unmodified.

On the other hand, we place two mackerel together in the genus *Scomber* even though