moot point, *cf.* the remarks at the close of the article on the subject in the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Several observers have reported hearing such sounds during the very brilliant auroral display of May 14. I could not detect any such sounds on this occasion, doubtless owing to the proximity of a large city from which the volume of sound, even at 3 A.M., is quite noticeable.

I desire to place on record, however, certain earlier experiences under almost perfect conditions of isolation and quiet. While in charge of the Labrador station of the Lick Observatory-Crocker Eclipse Expeditions of 1905, much of the work of adjusting the instruments was necessarily done at night. The station was located at Cartwright (latitude +53° 42′), and auroral displays were frequent and bright during July and August. On several nights I heard faint swishing, crackling sounds which I could attribute only to the aurora. There were times when large faintly luminous patches or "curtains" passed rapidly over our camp; these *seemed* to be close and not more than a few hundred feet above the ground, though doubtless much higher. The faint hissing and crackling sounds were more in evidence as such luminous patches swept over us.

Heber D. Curtis

Allegheny Observatory,
August 10, 1921

### LAWRENCE'S WARBLER

To the Editor of Science: It may be worth while to record the presence of the rare *Vermivora (Helminthophila) lawrencei* (Herrick) in Lexington, Virginia, on May 14. The warbler was observed sitting on a telephone wire less than ten yards from the porch of a house just on the outskirts of town, and its conspicuous black throat patch and white wing bars served to fully identify it, and differentiate it from *V. pinus* and *V. chrysoptera,* of which it is supposed to be a hybrid. Chapman speaks of it as much rarer than Brewster's warbler, *V. leucobronchialis,* the other supposed hybrid of these species, and says that less than a dozen specimens have been recorded.

Jas. Lewis Howe

Washington and Lee University,
Lexington, Virginia

## QUOTATIONS

### CHEMISTRY IN WAR

Two distinguished chemists have recently made pronouncements, identical on the material side, divergent on the moral side, on the use of posion gas in war. It is a question on which civilization will have to come to a decision or to live under lasting and increasing menace. Sir T. Edward Thorpe, in his presidential address to the British Association, at Edinburgh, told his audience that the Germans, between April, 1915, and September, 1918, had used no fewer than eighteen different forms of poison—gases, liquids, and solids—in their military operations. Reprisals became inevitable, and for the greater part of three years the leading nations of the world were flinging the most deadly products at one another that chemical knowledge could suggest and technical skill contrive. Sir William Pope, an equally eminent English chemist, speaking at Montreal a few days before, said that by the Armistice the Allies had sufficient supplies of mustard gas to "have enveloped the Germans knee deep, and had discovered a new vapor against which respirators would be of no avail, so strong that it would stop a man if it were present in the atmosphere in the proportion of one part in five millions." The President of the British Association admitted that warfare had now definitely entered on a new phase. But in passionate words he deplored the prospect on the part of science and of humanity, and hoped that, through the League of Nations or by some other form of international agreement, it might be averted. Sir William Pope, on the other hand, claimed that from the humanitarian point of view gas was more merciful than high explosives, and stated his belief that chemical agencies would be the sole deciding factor in future wars.