

THE Gray Herbarium, of Harvard University, has recently received a series of about 430 plants of tropical Africa, chiefly from the interior of Angola. The collection was the gift of Mrs. Richard C. Curtis, of Boston, having been prepared by her while accompanying her husband and his father, Mr. Charles P. Curtis, on a hunting expedition to secure specimens of the giant sable antelope. Many of the plants thus obtained by Mrs. Curtis during the later part of the dry season are believed to be the first of their species to reach any American herbarium. The herbarium has obtained by purchase a considerable series of critical drawings prepared by the late Professor E. Koehne, of Berlin, recording his dissections during the whole course of his monographic studies of the *Lythraceae*. The series exhibits in great detail the morphological characters of nearly all members of this family and brings to America much information regarding the group not previously available on this side of the Atlantic. The herbarium has also recently obtained the personal herbarium of the late archeologist Professor Eduard Seler, of Berlin, including a collection prepared by Professor and Mrs. Seler during their extensive travels in Yucatan, Chiapas and Guatemala, containing much material critically studied by Professor Loesener and other botanists of the Berlin Botanical Museum.

THE Sigma Xi Club, of Carleton College, recently organized with fifteen active members, is devoting the year's program to a review of recent work on "The constitution of matter." The remaining programs of the year comprise: Various Types of Rays, Dr. C. A. Culver, of the Physics Department; The Bohr Theory, Dr. E. A. Fath, of the Astronomy Department; The Quantum Theory, C. C. Furnas, of Shattuck School; Electrical Theory of Valence, Dr. E. O. Ellingson, of St. Olaf College, and Isotopes, Dr. A. T. Lincoln, of the Chemistry Department.

THE California Academy of Sciences announces a course of six Sunday afternoon lectures on Evolution as follows:

January 20. *The laws of heredity*, by DR. L. L. BURLINGAME, associate professor of botany, Stanford University.

January 27. *Heredity and plant breeding*, by DR. E. B. BABCOCK, professor of genetics, University of California.

February 3. *Heredity in man*, by DR. L. L. BURLINGAME, associate professor of botany, Stanford University.

February 10. *The evolution of man*, by DR. HAROLD HEATH, professor of zoology, Stanford University.

February 17. *The present status of Darwinism*, by DR. S. J. HOLMES, professor of zoology, University of California.

February 24. *The trend of the race*, by DR. S. J. HOLMES, professor of zoology, University of California.

These lectures are given in the auditorium of the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park and are free to the public.

*Nature* says: "We regret to note an announcement in the December issue of *Discovery* that this number is to be the last to appear. All who are interested in the spread of a knowledge and appreciation of the results of scientific investigation among the general public will regret the disappearance of this publication. Since it was founded in 1920, *Discovery* has consistently maintained a high standard of scientific accuracy, and has placed before its readers in clear and non-technical language a large number of articles, necessarily varying considerably in merit, which were selected with the express intention of keeping readers abreast of the latest movements of thought in the scientific world. It was started under favorable auspices at a time when the events of the war had impressed upon the public mind the value of scientific research from a practical point of view. Its committee of management consisted of representatives of the most important of the scientific and learned societies, and amongst its contributors it has numbered some of the most prominent of the scientific men of the day. Yet notwithstanding these facts, and notwithstanding a wide appreciation of its merits as a popular scientific publication, it has failed through lack of support."

#### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NOTES

A GIFT of \$20,000 has been made to Columbia University by an anonymous donor to be used for the exclusive benefit of the Department of Geology, to be known as the James Furman Kemp Fund. The income from the fund may be applied to fellowships, scholarships, loans to students, field research expeditions, office and laboratory researches, purchase of equipment, or other valid requirements for which there are no stated funds regularly advanced by the university.

THE Baker Laboratory of Chemistry was dedicated at Cornell University on December 22. Mr. J. DuPratt White, vice-chairman of the Board of Trustees, presided at the exercises; Mr. Baker himself presented the keys of the building to President Farrand who accepted them for the university; Professor L. M. Dennis, head of the Department of Chemistry, spoke briefly on the significance of Mr. Baker's gift to the advancement of both the science and the art of chemistry. The guests then inspected the laboratory and its equipment, and were shown the operation of the mechanical features of the building and of many new forms of apparatus.

THE cornerstone of the new laboratory for the study of psychology at Princeton University was laid

at the university on January 9. Professor Howard C. Warren, of the Department of Psychology; Henry Lane Eno, who gave the money for the building, and President John Grier Hibben were the speakers.

DR. ELMER DREW MERRILL, director of the Bureau of Science of the Philippine Islands and head of the department of botany in the University of the Philippines, has been appointed professor of agriculture and dean of the College of Agriculture in the University of California. Dr. Richard P. Boynton, head of the research laboratories under the Philippine government, has been appointed professor of veterinary science.

DR. JAMES E. KINDRED, formerly assistant professor of biology at Western Reserve University, has been appointed assistant professor of histology and embryology in the Medical School of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville.

DR. ANTON A. DAMPF, director of the Zoological Institute of Königsberg, has received a call from the Agricultural College of Mexico City to take over the post of professor of applied zoology and state entomologist. Dr. Dampf was formerly on the staff of the colonial government of German East Africa.

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

### THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF BUFFALO-GRASS

I HAVE just received an invitation to become a member of the National Society for the Preservation of Buffalo-grass.

Three other somewhat similar invitations lie unanswered upon my table.

On the average I receive three times a week, that is about one hundred and fifty times a year, invitations to join societies, associations, institutes, boards, or committees, which, according to the accompanying prospectuses are about to be called into being, or have been called into being, to promote educational, scientific, philosophic, economic, or social progress, reform, or discussion. I am usually given the alternative of becoming a "charter member" (dues \$100) or a member of the "common garden variety" (annual dues \$5.00).

I would not be human did I not feel highly complimented at being thus solicited, but I am a student of economics, and I ascertain by computation, that, if I graciously comply with all the invitations I receive, my expenditures will amount in the case of charter or life-memberships, which are solicited, to \$15,000 a year, an amount which vastly exceeds my salary; and that, if refraining from the glory of becoming a "charter member," I simply accept ordinary active membership, that will involve an expenditure of \$750 a year, really not an inconsiderable amount for a "poor devil."

I am prompted to ask, as I toy with the last accumulation of invitations which burden my desk, whether upon the whole it would not be better, instead of multiplying agencies, to give more support to those which already exist, and whether concerted action might not tend to alleviate the sorrows of those who like myself have a disposition to be useful in their day and generation, but are forced by the *res angusta domi* to refrain from having a part in these commendable movements. Should not amalgamation rather than multiplication be contended for?

Of course there is a great deal to be said against such procedure. It would tend to arrest the seething activities of noble minds. It might reduce the revenues of the United States Post Office, not to speak of the postal revenues of other countries. It would interfere with the ambitions of many hitherto unknown persons to have their names printed as members of boards, committees, societies, etc. To such persons it might be almost heart-breaking to be deprived of the opportunity to shine in a body designed to be "national" or "international" in its scope and purpose. When a citizen of Podunk (a locality made famous by the after-dinner speeches of the Hon. Chauncey M. Depew) has become a member of the "Executive Council" of the "National Society for the Preservation of Buffalo-grass," he becomes to a certain extent an object of veneration in Podunk. It seems cruel to deprive of honor one who has thus attained to exaltation among his fellow-townsmen, by proposing that the National Society for the Preservation of Buffalo-grass should be merged into the National Society of Agrostology, which does not confine itself to Buffalo-grass, but promotes the preservation and propagation of timothy-grass and clover, in fact of all grasses. Furthermore, it is urged, and with great weight, that in these days of specialization, we ought to have men who are willing to concentrate their attention upon Buffalo-grass. Buffalo-grass is disappearing, so we are informed, from vast areas, where at one time it furnished nutriment to millions of buffaloes. It is alleged that Buffalo-grass may shortly become extinct. Of this it is frightful to think. That a grass, which "God made," and which in turn made the buffalo, should die out over hundreds of square miles, which once were covered by it, is cause for poignant regret, and it seems cruel to even suggest a curtailment of the zeal and intelligent efforts of the philagrostic ladies and gentlemen in New York, Washington and Podunk, who are inflamed by a desire to save for the nation the herbage which once carpeted the prairies. I instinctively shrink from such action. Nevertheless, when requested to support the cause, I am constrained, in spite of the inward remonstrances of my loving disposition, to ask whether, after all, the National Society of Agrostology might not do the work which is