

Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Dr. Ira T. Wilson, professor of zoology, Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio; Dr. O. P. Dellinger, professor of zoology, State Normal School, Pittsburg, Kansas; Dr. D. C. Warren, geneticist, Kansas State Agricultural College; Dr. Frank P. Reagan, professor of zoology, University of California; Dr. William Ray Allen, professor of zoology, University of Kentucky; Will P. Morgan, professor of zoology, Indiana Central College, Indianapolis, and the following from Indiana University: Dr. William J. Moenkhaus, professor of physiology; Dr. Will Scott, and Dr. Fernandus Payne, professors of zoology, and Nathan E. Pearson, Lowell T. Coggeshall, H. R. Bolen. Dr. Payne acted as toastmaster and Drs. Headlee, Riddle, Pike, Juday, Kennedy, Reagan, Banta, Scott and Eigenmann responded.

A STUDY of the reputed healing and medicinal properties of the hot springs situated on a government reserve at Hot Springs, Arkansas, will be one of the researches in cooperation with the United States government which the medical division of the National Research Council will consider this fall, according to Dr. Clarence M. Jackson, who is director of the medical division this year. Dr. Jackson is chairman of the department of anatomy in the school of medicine of the University of Minnesota, which has granted him a year's leave of absence. The investigations at Hot Springs have been requested by Dr. Hubert Work, secretary of the interior, who last year was president of the American Medical Association. During his year in Washington, Dr. Jackson plans to complete a book on "The Effects of Inanition" on which he is at work.

### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NOTES

CONTRACTS have been awarded for the erection of the hall of chemistry for the University of West Virginia at Morgantown. It is estimated that the completed structure will cost about \$750,000. The building will be 305.7 by 79 feet, four stories, basement and attic, with an extension of one story and basement.

DR. ELLIOT CARR CUTLER, associate in surgery and chairman in the department of surgery in the Harvard Medical School, has accepted the professorship of surgery in the School of Medicine at Western Reserve University and the office of house surgeon of Lakeside Hospital.

DR. GEORGE STRONG DERBY, formerly assistant professor of ophthalmology in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, has been appointed Williams professor of ophthalmology in place of Dr. Alexander Quackenboss who became professor emeritus on December 1.

DR. HOWARD DE FOREST, formerly assistant professor of botany at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, has been promoted to a professorship of botany and to the chairmanship of the botany division of the department of biology.

DR. CHARLES SHATTUCK PALMER, National Research Council fellow in organic chemistry at Yale University, has accepted an appointment starting February first as assistant professor of organic chemistry at Northwestern University. He will have charge of the courses ordinarily given by Dr. W. Lee Lewis, who is on leave of absence from the university to serve as director of scientific research of the Institute of American Meat Packers.

DR. ARAO ITANO, assistant professor of microbiology at the Massachusetts Agricultural College, has tendered his resignation with the request that it take effect at the close of the current college year. He plans to return to Japan, where he is to have charge of the division of microbiology and chemistry at the Ohara Institute of Agricultural Research.

PROFESSOR ERNST MANGOLD, department head in the Physiological Institute in Freiberg, has been called to Berlin as director of the Veterinary Physiological Institute, to succeed the late Professor N. Zuntz.

DR. GANESH PRASAD, dean of the faculty of science in the Benares Hindu University, has been appointed Hardinge professor of higher mathematics in the University of Calcutta in succession to Professor C. E. Cullis.

### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

#### MIRA, THE STRANGE STAR

A NOTE by *Science Service* in SCIENCE (Supplement, Dec. 28, 1923) on the significance of the recent discovery of a close companion to *Omicron Ceti* opens with the statement, which if correct would be disquieting, that the discovery "is baffling astronomers and may necessitate a revision of present theories of the size and distribution of the stars." This statement is expanded later in the note in the form of a dilemma. Either the two stars are physically connected, in which case the companion must be extraordinarily faint for a star of its spectral class; or they are independent and at entirely different orders of distance from us, in which case the companion, assuming it to have the luminosity of the average star of its class, must be "in a region of space where we know of no other star of this kind."

These statements seem to be based on an imperfect appreciation of the facts. In the first place the dilemma does not exist, for the annual proper motion of *Mira*, approximately  $0''.23$  in  $186^\circ$ , is in itself sufficient evidence of the physical connection of the two