Reptiles of Western North America," published by the California Academy of Sciences in 1922. This is a monumental work in two volumes, 1,028 pages and 128 excellent halftone plates, indispensable in the study of western American herpetology.

Dr. Van Denburgh's wide experience as a field naturalist, his knowledge of comparative anatomy and physiology, his expertness in laboratory technique, together with infinite patience and a genius for the interpretation of taxonomic relationships, enabled him to do research work of the highest order and to place him among the most able herpetologists of his time. His death while yet in his prime is an irreparable loss to the California Academy of Sciences and to herpetological science, as well as to his friends and coworkers.

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SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

MOSELEYUM AND THE NAMES OF ELEMENTS[1]

IN the issue of SCIENCE for February 20, Professor Richard Hamer, of the University of Pittsburgh, Pa., enters a plea for naming the missing element of atomic number 43 before it is discovered; in view of the work of Bosanquet and Keeley (*Phil. Mag.*, 1924 (6), 145–147) and of others, he thinks that the discovery can not be long delayed, and also that by taking time by the forelock in this manner, subsequent controversy, like that which followed the discovery of hafnium, will not arise. Professor Hamer appeals to the scientific world to name the element "Moseleyum," in honor of the young British physicist who fell in Gallipoli, and to give it the symbol "Ms." In our view it would be a fitting tribute to the brilliant work of Moseley to perpetuate his name in some such way. Hitherto, no chemical element has been named after an individual (we exclude mercury, tantalum, thorium and titanium for an obvious reason), and opinion may be divided on the advisability of making the innovation. It is, however, a mistake to be bound by precedent in such a matter, and the only objection we can foresee to the adoption of Professor Hamer's suggestion is that the word is not particularly euphonious, and is rather suggestive of certain sepulchral monuments; but it might be argued that even this suggestiveness is not inappropriate, inasmuch as mausoleums are erected, as a rule, to the memory of the illustrious dead.

Referring to our note (*Nature*, April 11, p. 545) on Professor R. Hamer's suggestion to name the undiscovered element of atomic number 43 "moseleyum," after H. G. J. Moseley, Professor Irvine Masson writes that such action would not, as stated, be an innovation, as "one element *is* named after an individual: namely, Gadolinium, a rare-earth element, called after Gadolin." The historical facts appear to be as follows: The mineral gadolinite, discovered in 1788, was named after the Finnish chemist Johann Gadolin, who in 1794 discovered a new earth—yttria—in it. About a century later, Marignac showed that yttria (which he had obtained from samarskite) contained a new element, and when Lecoq de Boisbaudran announced to the Paris Academy of Sciences that Marignac had chosen for it the name "gadolinium," he gave no reason for the selection (*Comptes rendus*, 1886, p. 902). The case of the element samarium is somewhat similar. The complex parent mineral samarskite was, apparently, named after a Russian mine officer, Samarski. When the existence of the element was proved, Lecoq de Boisbaudran told the academy that the honor of its discovery really belonged to several investigators, and he proposed the name "samarium" because the word was "derivé de la racine qui a déjà servi à former le mot 'samarskite'" (*Comptes rendus*, 1879, p. 214). Whether the words "gadolinium" and "samarium" were derived directly, or indirectly, from the names of men or minerals appears of little moment; both perpetuate the names of individuals, and therefore, in this sense, the appellation "moseleyum" would have two precedents.

[1] From *Nature*.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

THE American Association of Museums is holding its twentieth annual meeting at St. Louis. Sessions begin on Monday, May 18, and continue until Thursday noon. The Sunday preceding the meeting is to be the occasion of a sail down the Mississippi River and of other hospitalities tendered by the local committee.

The purpose of the association in choosing St. Louis for its meeting place is to assist a local group in efforts to establish a science museum in that city. St. Louis already has an art museum, a history museum and the best known school museum in the world. The last institution, the Educational Museum of the St. Louis public schools, is organized under the department of education and is devoted exclusively to school service.

The program of the St. Louis meeting follows:

SUNDAY, MAY 17

10:00 A. M. Registration at the Chase Hotel.

11:00 A. M. Visit to the Zoological Garden. Busses will take members and guests from the hotel.