

THE Evaporated Milk Association has given two fellowships to the University of Chicago, one for \$1,500 to the home economics department for determining the availability of calcium and other minerals, and the other to the department of hygiene and bacteriology for determining vitamin C.

Two industrial fellowships, as a mark of recognition of the lines of investigation pursued there, have been established in the departments of agricultural chemistry and bacteriology, respectively, of the University of Wisconsin. The Quaker Oats Company of America has given \$3,200 to the former as an aid in securing impartial data on vitamins in cereals and their products with special reference to rolled oats and the antirachitic vitamin, and the Commercial Solvents Corporation has allotted \$2,500 to the latter department working in conjunction with the other, to secure data on fermentation problems.

COLGATE AND COMPANY have established a research fellowship at the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, in the department of chemistry, for the purpose of studying the causes of tooth decay. The first Colgate fellow will be Dr. Sylva Thurlow. The work is to be carried on under the direction of the professor of chemistry, Dr. H. H. Bunzell.

DR. A. W. CROSSLEY, presiding at the annual dinner of the Chemical Society, London, referred to the difficult position in which the society finds itself on account of the increased cost of publication. Subscriptions of fellows have been raised, various limitations have been placed upon the distribution of the society's publications, and papers are curtailed as much as possible, yet there is a financial deficit, and no practical means of avoiding it have yet been found. On this situation *Nature* comments: "During the war, chemists saved the nation from disaster by supplying drugs, poison gases and protection from them, and other products demanded by the times, and it does not seem too much to ask that assistance should now be afforded in placing upon record the work they are doing for the advancement of knowledge. When one remembers the vast sums expended upon the verbatim reports of proceedings in Parliament published in the large volumes of Hansard, and considers how trivial most of the matters are in comparison with the original contributions made to a body like the Chemical Society, it is difficult to understand the national sense of value which leaves the society in its present anxious position. Possibly the additional £1,500 received by the Royal Society in aid of scientific publication will enable a grant to be made to the Chemical Society, but in our opinion a very strong case can be made out by many other scientific societies for assistance towards costs of pub-

lication, either from the state or private benefactions, and we should like to see a concerted effort made with the view of securing adequate funds for this purpose."

## UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NOTES

GIFTS totalling \$4,517,348, in addition to substantial contributions to the special \$10,000,000 fund for chemistry, business and fine arts, were announced by President Lowell at the annual meeting of the Harvard Alumni Association.

PROFESSOR MELVILLE F. COOLBAUGH, of Golden, Colo., has been elected president of the Colorado School of Mines, succeeding Dr. Victor C. Alderson.

DR. WILLIAM S. ELKIN, for seventeen years dean of the Emory University School of Medicine, has resigned and has been elected emeritus dean and emeritus professor of obstetrics and gynecology. Dr. Russell H. Oppenheimer was elected dean to succeed Dr. Elkin.

DR. JASPER LUTHER BEESON, professor of chemistry in the Georgia State College for Women, Milledgeville, has been appointed dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in this institution.

DR. PAUL D. LAMSON, associate professor of pharmacology in the Johns Hopkins University Medical School, has been appointed professor of pharmacology at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tenn.

RICHARD M. SUTTON, for three years instructor in physics in Miami University, Ohio, has resigned to take a fellowship in physics at the California Institute of Technology.

PROFESSOR CHARLES SHATTUCK PALMER, who for the past year has been research chemist of the department of scientific research, Institute of American Meat Packers, Chicago, will rejoin the staff of the department of chemistry of Northwestern University in September.

DR. EDWARD SAMPSON, associate geologist, U. S. Geological Survey, has been appointed assistant professor of geology at Princeton University.

DR. WALTHER F. HOLST, son of President Axel Holst, of the University of Christiania, and discoverer of vitamin C, has been elected instructor in poultry husbandry at the University of California.

DR. WALTER NORMAN HAWORTH, professor of organic chemistry in the University of Durham, Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been appointed professor of chemistry and director of the department of chemistry in the University of Birmingham,

England, in place of Professor G. T. Morgan, who has resigned.

DAVID JACK, at present associate professor in the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, has been appointed an assistant in the department of natural philosophy at the University of St. Andrews, England.

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

### THE EXCESSIVE POLITENESS OF AMERICAN BOTANISTS

WHOEVER writes a novel or a collection of essays—and gets it published—feels that some one somewhere is likely to say, in print, just what he thinks of the book and why. The American botanist who writes a paper has, on the other hand, every reason to believe that he will have little difficulty in finding a publisher; and thanks to the excessive politeness or perhaps the indifference of his colleagues, he is also reasonably certain that no matter how poor the paper be, no one will tell him so even in print. This is merely another way of saying that American botanical literature is conspicuously lacking in adequate criticism. The probable causes of this lack will be discussed briefly in the present note.

There can be no question that we need criticism. Probably the only American botanists whose work is open to no criticism are those who have published no papers. Occasionally, the need of criticism is acute. For example, the February number of *Phytopathology* contained an article in which it was announced as a discovery that *Rhizopus* rot is an important disease of peaches in transit. The concluding paragraph strongly urged that pathologists give attention to this rot and study methods of control. No literature relative to *Rhizopus* rot of peaches was cited, although there are two recent American papers dealing with the subject, one of which was published in the *Journal of Agricultural Research* and the other in *Phytopathology* itself. To date, no review or criticism of this paper has appeared.

In general, we confine our criticisms of papers to personal discussions at times when neither the author of the paper nor the editor of the journal is present. In the February number of the *American Journal of Botany* there appeared an article on *poisonous* plants. This contribution contains such information as that “. . . the burrs of the chestnut produce mechanical injuries” and that “buckwheat cakes sometimes produce a dermatitis in people and hogs.” The prevalent southern notion that “Buckwheat cakes and Injun batter makes you fat or a little fatter” was somehow overlooked. This paper was read aloud recently to a group of professional botanists assembled at lunch. It was greeted with undignified shouts of glee. Regarded purely as a humorous article it was a huge suc-

cess, although two or three of the older members of the society which supports the journal did express the opinion that it was a disgrace to the society. One of them, who has been much in Europe, stated that on account of the publication of such papers we are rapidly losing our standing with European botanists. No one, so far as can be learned, has taken the trouble to write a serious review or even a letter to the editor.

It can not be successfully contended that American botanists lack the ability to criticize. Dr. Fernald's reviews of publications in his field are of unusually high quality and have added materially to his standing as a botanist. Dr. Heald's review of Stevens' “Fungi Which Cause Plant Disease” is a classic.

American botanists have also shown decided ability to appreciate criticism. The editorial review published in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* for February, 1921, of Dr. Coville's paper on the influence of cold in stimulating the growth of plants was widely read and appreciated by American botanists, including, we believe, the author of the criticized paper. More recently American botanists have read with interest, in the *International Sugar Journal*, Dr. E. W. Cross's review of Lee's paper on present needs in cane disease control.

Reference to the note in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* brings up the interesting question of why friendly and constructive criticism is more common in English botanical publications than in American. Without attempting to answer the question in detail it may be suggested that perhaps real criticism is lacking in American botany because of the great American tendency to move in crowds. Most American botanists of the present generation have been college trained; that is, they have been trained to boost for the old college and yell for the home team. They hate to offend personal friends. They realize that an incisive review may hurt the reviewer's chances of election to the vice-presidency of the section of oenotheriology of the Botanical Society of America—and so, the review is not written.

The need of adequate criticism in American botany being recognized, how shall it be met? In the literary field it is met by a special class of writers, many of whom in the past have attained high standing as critics. This solution of the problem is perhaps not possible in botany at the present time, although something similar has been suggested. Only recently, the distinguished professor of botany in one of our great universities wrote a Washington botanist: “Why does not the department establish a division of research criticisms and reviews and start a journal in that line?” This is emphasized by the pen note, “*This is serious and no joke.*” Granted the desirability of such a journal, why should it be conducted by the Department of Agriculture? Why should it not