DANGER TO THE CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK

I WISH to call the attention of all scientific men, especially botanists, zoologists, ecologists and all lovers and students of nature to the importance of preserving intact the magnificent area of primeval forest that covers much of the southern part of Crater Lake Park in Oregon. The lake itself, one of the two or three greatest scenic localities of the continent, is not the only important feature of the park. The splendid tracts of forest that extend from the high altitudes near the crater rim to the much lower region near the south boundary of the park furnish beautiful examples of several of the types of forest characteristic of the different altitudes in the mountains of the Pacific states. From the scientific and educational point of view as well as from an esthetic one the preservation of this forest is most important. From an economic point of view its destruction is unjustifiable, for it would not stave off the impending end of our timber supply for a single day at the rate we now consume it. Our national park system contains far too much bare rock and barren, scrubbily timbered land, and far too little of the wonderful forests with trees two hundred feet tall or more of which the Pacific states formerly had so much, but which have already been reduced to mere remnants. Our nation does not stand in the slightest need of the paltry sum that will be allowed to dribble into the public treasury from the sale of the Crater Lake Park forests for lumber.

Yet we have every reason to fear and believe that the rumors that high administrative officers of the government have agreed to promote legislation to cut off the southwestern part of the park and place it where its forests will be opened up to the lumbermen are well founded, and that at the next session of Congress this legislation will be slipped through with as little publicity and as little opportunity for any protest as in the case of the laws cutting off valuable parts of other national parks that have passed the present Congress.

WILLARD G. VAN NAME
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

A NEW (NINTH) EDITION OF LEE'S "THE MICROTOMIST'S VADEMECUM"

ALL investigators in the biological sciences are indebted to this book for information. The last edition, published in 1921, was edited by Professor J. Brontë Gatenby and largely rewritten by him with the cooperation of Professor W. M. Bayliss, Dr. C. Da Fano, Dr. A. Drew, Dr. W. Cramer and Mr. J. Thornton Carter. It has been so much in demand that a ninth edition is now called for by the publishers, Messrs. P. Blakiston's Son and Company of Philadelphia. In order that adequate and very up-to-date references may be made to the advances in technique which have been made in the United States, Professor Gatenby requests that notes regarding new methods be sent to him directly at the *University Zoological Department, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.* He plans to send all proofs to the publishers not later than October 31, 1926.

E. V. COWDRY
THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, NEW YORK

QUOTATIONS

THE PARIS BUREAU OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION

THE Office d'Information scientifique et technique of Paris, the initiation of which was noted in our issue for June 12, has favored us with copies of two recent news bulletins, which are interesting to compare with similar issues of the allied Science Service in Washington. The French material has been well selected, and is of real scientific interest; the language is plain and the treatment straightforward, but its somewhat educational tone raises a doubt as to whether the presentation is sufficiently attractive to appeal to editors and readers of the popular press; it may be, however, that the intellectual standard in France is higher than elsewhere. In the United States and England, it is the practice to attract the reader by one or more glaring headlines, to convey the gist of the information (which should contain news) in a short initial paragraph, and then to proceed with details and embellishment. The French procedure, as displayed in these bulletins, is more logical: the headlines are distinctly sober and lacking in "pep"; the article begins with an explanatory or historical preamble, and the news is reserved for a later stage. Although this method will be preferred by the student, it is less effective in attracting the lay reader than the more sensational style of approach.

The "news" element of the bulletins is not strongly represented in the specimens before us, and in a few cases, for example, the articles on telegraphic reception and the nature of X-rays, the explanations given may convey little to the uninitiated. In about one half of the items the information comes from the United States, and the remainder from France; when the service gets better under way one may expect material from other countries to be included. The news appears to have been culled mainly from periodical literature—which must always constitute an important

source—but it is to be hoped that first-hand news obtained from research workers and inventors will later become available; in this respect the American Service has been singularly successful. It is of happy augury that the French organization is starting with high ideals: it will not try to serve both science and mammon; commercial profit is outside its scope and there will be no traffic with the advertiser; and it will preserve a rigid independence of all parties, groups and factions. Its sole aim is the prompt diffusion of scientific and technical knowledge in a way that will neither "mystify the crowd" nor promote sophistry and error by over-indulgence in "purple patches."—*Nature.*

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

The Music of the Spheres, A Nature Lover's Astronomy, by FLORENCE GRONDAL. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1926. xiii + 234 pages.

IF we were called upon to apologize for the pursuit of pure science, that is of knowledge for its own sake, the diffusion of such knowledge among the masses would be our chief argument. Accordingly, every successful attempt to get the general reader into the path that leads to an acquaintance with the present state of science should be warmly welcomed. A goodly number of such attempts have been made in recent years, particularly in the biological and physical sciences, but many of them have failed either because the man of science has not known how to write or because the writer has not known his science. Notable successes in this field are for the most part the performances of leaders in science who have taken the trouble to learn how to write. But there are some exceptions to this; a very interesting one is presented by the excellent astronomical books of the late Agnes Clerke, who never did any astronomical work herself, but who had the good sense to make use of the cooperation of expert astronomers.

The book before us begins with the most elementary and (to the beginner) the most fascinating phase of the subject, namely, the story of the constellations and the mythology that forms their basis. Intermingled with these stories and following them is an introduction to the present state of astronomy. The author brings to her task a genuine love of the subject and much enthusiasm, and she has a spritely style that makes her text easy reading; but her knowledge of the science is surprisingly deficient. So many and so serious are her misapprehensions that the book defeats its own purpose; the reader who goes on (as the author obviously hopes and expects him to do) to a second and more advanced work will have in his mind ample material for confusion and discouragement. Of those pages that deal with astronomy, as distinct from mythology, there is hardly one that a well-informed critic would leave unchanged in its statement of fact or explanation. From a list that might be made painfully long a few may be cited.

The names of Antares and Capella (page 11), together with those of many other stars, are of Greek and Latin origin, not Arabic. On pages 39, 262 and 301 the spectroscope is credited with feats it has not performed; it did not explode the old idea that stars are fixed (the discovery of proper motions did that at least a century earlier); and it has not proved that the polar caps on Mars are snow or that there is no water on the moon. The Nova in Cassiopeia (page 60) was seen in 1572, not six centuries ago. Surely everyone knows that Bessel had at least something to do with the measurement of the first stellar distance (page 100). By no means is 61 Cygni (page 134) the nearest star as seen from the northern hemisphere nor even the nearest star north of the celestial equator. The period of Delta Cephei (page 140), one of the best known variables in the sky, is more than five days, not four and a half hours. Sirius is not our largest star (page 141) but merely the brightest as seen from the solar system. Six first magnitude stars, in addition to those enumerated (page 145) can be seen from certain points in this country; one of these six is Canopus, a conspicuous object throughout a large part of the country. It is ridiculous to say (page 156) that "about 500 red stars have already been observed but these are all at a distance vastly remote"; the number is much greater and some of them are among our nearest neighbors. Similarly (page 64), the number of known Algol variables is not merely thirty; it exceeds 150. Almost every one knows that Bremen is not in Lower Saxony (page 233). October (page 267) was no more named for a Roman festival than were September, November and December. The brighter moons of Saturn measure thousands of miles in diameter, not hundreds (page 276); and several besides Titan can be seen in small telescopes. The discussion of the age of the earth on page 285 is woefully out of date. The capture of a comet by a stellar system can hardly depend upon the morale of the comet (page 241): "A great comet may be material drawn in from outside space, perhaps flying back and forth between two stars until it becomes so exhausted that one of the stars is able to capture it."

The book is handsomely printed and illustrated; in these respects it does credit to a publishing house whose standards are so well and favorably known. It is a great pity that Mrs. Grondal did not submit her manuscript to a competent astronomer before venturing into print.

FRANK SCHLESINGER
YALE UNIVERSITY OBSERVATORY,
JULY 8, 1926