

Society the following account of Professor Musil's work:

Professor Musil is now recognized as the foremost living authority on the topography, history and folklore of the desert tracts lying between the settlements of Palestine and Syria on the west, the Tigris on the east, and the oases of Nejd on the south. Since 1896 he has spent many seasons in the field in the course of journeys on camel-back covering a total distance of no less than 13,000 miles. An extremely close observer, Professor Musil has recorded on his maps detailed topographic features and place-names over broad districts previously wholly unexplored. By comparing the results of his field work with the ancient documentary sources, he has been able to reconstruct the probable course of historical events that have hitherto proved enigmas to students of the Old Testament, and to Assyriologists, classicists and Arabicists. His most sensational discovery was made in 1898 on the edge of the desert east of the Dead Sea. Here he found the Kuseyr 'Amra, well-preserved ruins of a summer residence built by the Omayyad caliph Walid II in the eighth century of our era. The interior walls of this structure were decorated with paintings illustrating the adventures of the caliph in the hunting field and with portraits of the fallen rulers of the various countries which had been brought under Moslem subjection—among them one of Roderick, the last Visigothic king of Spain. From the geographical point of view Professor Musil's most striking work was the determination of the position of the main watershed of northern Arabia and the exploration of the fringes of the Nefud, or great sand waste that lies between Nejd and the Hamad steppes (sometimes called the Syrian desert). Professor Musil also traced the lower course of the River Tharthar, in the interior of Mesopotamia, to its outlet in an unexplored salt lake on the floor of a depression fifty meters below sea-level. Reports of this stream may have given rise to the classical legend of Tartarus, river of the underworld.

Professor Musil has made an extremely important contribution to our knowledge of Bedouin folklore. Accepted as a member of the Rwala tribe, on equal terms with their head chief, he was enabled to study the life of these nomads in its minutest details. He records, translates and explains several hundred of their songs in his volume, "The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins."

The results of Professor Musil's researches prior to 1908 were published in two great series by the Vienna Academy of Science: "Kusejr 'Amra" (in 2 volumes) and "Arabia Petraea" (in 4 volumes); the latter is accompanied by a map of Arabia Petraea on the scale of 1:500,000. His field work of 1908-1915 is described in a series of six volumes, the publication of which by the American Geographical Society has been made possible through the generosity of Charles R. Crane, Esq. Five of these six volumes are devoted to the narratives of the explorer's itineraries and to historical essays on the various regions visited. Three volumes are now in print ("The Northern Hegâz," 1926; "Arabia Deserta," 1927, and "The Middle Euphrates," 1927). Two more will be published in the course of 1928 ("Palmyrena"

and "Northern Negd"), and the sixth volume of the series ("The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouin") will also appear before the close of the present year. Forming an integral part of this series are three maps: The Northern Hegâz, 1:500,000; Northern Arabia, in four sheets, 1:1,000,000, and Southern Mesopotamia, 1:1,000,000.

NATIONAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS IN THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

THE Board of National Research Fellowships in the Biological Sciences met on February 10 and 11 and made the following awards for the year 1928-29:

Reappointments

Kenneth Cole—Biophysics
Robert Emerson—Botany
M. B. Linford—Botany
Louis W. Max—Psychology
G. G. Pincus—Zoology
Jack Schultz—Zoology
B. H. Wallace—Botany

New Appointments

F. M. Carpenter—Zoology
F. E. Clements—Anthropology
S. H. Emerson—Botany
Eileen W. Erlanson—Botany
Clay G. Huff—Zoology
C. F. Jacobsen—Psychology
D. A. Johansen—Botany
P. A. Readio—Zoology
D. C. Smith—Zoology
M. T. Sonneborn—Zoology
R. C. Tryon—Psychology

The second meeting of the board for further appointments for 1928-29 will be held the latter part of May, and applications for consideration at that time are requested by April 15. The necessary forms and information for making application may be secured from the Secretary, Board of National Research Fellowships in the Biological Sciences, National Research Council, Washington, D. C.

FRANK R. LILLIE, *Chairman,*
Board of National Research Fellowships
in the Biological Sciences

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

IN recognition of his research work in the field of catalysis, the Nichols medal was formally awarded to Dr. Hugh Stott Taylor, David B. Jones research professor of chemistry at Princeton University, on March 9. The presentation of the medal followed a dinner at the Chemists' Club, given by the New York section of the American Electrochemical Society, the Society of Chemical Industry and the Société de Chimie Industrielle. After speeches by Dean James Kendall,