# SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

## A NEW EDITION OF WILLARD GIBBS'S WORKS AND PROPOSED COMMENTARY

IN 1906 the writings of Willard Gibbs were printed in a collected edition of two volumes entitled, "The Scientific Papers of J. Willard Gibbs." Volume I contained all his papers on thermodynamics, and volume II the remainder of his published writings, with the exception of the book "Elementary Principles in Statistical Mechanics," which had been published only five years earlier and was at that time still available. At the present time both volume I of the "Scientific Papers" and the volume on "Statistical Mechanics" are out of print.

In connection with a movement started last winter to establish at Yale University a memorial in honor of Willard Gibbs, provision has been made, through the generosity of a donor who prefers to remain anonymous, for a new and complete edition of Willard Gibbs's writings. This will consist of either two or three volumes, well printed and bound, and will be sold at a very moderate price to encourage a wide distribution. It will probably be published during 1928.

In addition to this reprinting of the original text of Gibbs's works, it is proposed to publish, at some later date, a volume or volumes designed to aid the reader to bridge the well-recognized gap between Gibbs's theorems on the one hand and the actual experimental data of the chemist and physicist on the other. This supplementary material, to be written by competent authorities in the several fields, would aim (a) to explain the philosophical background of Gibbs's method; (b) to amplify the treatment of points of special difficulty; (c) to discuss the evaluation of Gibbs's functions in terms of directly measurable quantities, and (d) to furnish a variety of illustrative examples from the literature now available. Such treatment is most needed in the case of the thermodynamic papers, but the plan may be extended to cover Gibbs's writings on other subjects if it seems expedient. The financial support of the undertaking has been liberally provided for, and suitable honoraria will be paid to the authors of the new material.

The undersigned committee, appointed to study this plan, earnestly solicits suggestions and comments from all persons interested, especially with respect to any or all of the following questions:

I. Which of the aims outlined above are the most important?

II. How should the subject-matter be subdivided into parts which can be handled by a single author?

III. What persons, irrespective of nationality, are best fitted by ability and training to undertake these different parts?

Letters containing suggestions or criticisms will be welcomed and may be addressed to the Gibbs Committee, Sterling Chemistry Laboratory, New Haven, Conn.

JOHN JOHNSTON,
WILLIAM F. G. SWANN,
RALPH G. VAN NAME, *Chairman*
YALE UNIVERSITY

## BARRO COLORADO ISLAND STATION

DR. THOMAS BARBOUR, chairman of the executive committee of the Institute for Research in Tropical America, has made his fourth annual report on Barro Colorado Island Station. It is a report of encouraging progress in the work and material development of the station.

"Redwood House," at the end of Armour trail, has been built of redwood lumber sent from California in order to test this lumber for resistance to termites. The new house is now completed and provided with everything necessary for a stay of several days. A new storeroom 28 feet long and 9 feet wide has also been built of redwood. An observation tower 28 feet high has been erected on the highest point of the island. Old trails have been extended and new ones laid out. Bridges have been made across some of the steepest ravines.

Among those who have carried on studies at the station during the year may be mentioned Dr. Frank M. Chapman, of the American Museum of Natural History; Dr. L. A. Kenoyer, head of the department of biology of Western State Normal School at Kalamazoo, Michigan; Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne, of the museum of zoology of the University of Michigan; Dr. Alfred O. Gross, professor of biology at Bowdoin College; Dr. George B. Wislocki, of the department of anatomy of the Johns Hopkins University; Dr. Curt P. Richter, of the Johns Hopkins Hospital; Miss Walburga A. Petersen, of the University of Wisconsin; Dr. Howard E. Enders, head of the biology department of Purdue University; Dr. Herbert Osborn, director of the Ohio Biological Survey; Dr. Thornton W. Burgess, of Springfield, Mass.; Dr. W. E. Hastings, of the conservation commission of Michigan, and Messrs. Ludlow Griscom and Maunsell S. Crosby, of the Museum of Comparative Zoology.

During the year a number of technical papers of importance have been published by various workers embodying the results of work on the Island and Isthmus.

The financial support of the station has continued to come from the University of Michigan, American Museum of Natural History, Harvard University, the Johns Hopkins University and Missouri Botanical Garden; from fees from scientific workers, and from

private sources, notably from Dr. Barbour and Mr. Allison V. Armour.

The station is in much need of larger financial support than it now has. Other institutions like those mentioned should make annual subscriptions. Any subscribing institution has the privilege of having its members given preferential treatment when there are more applicants for place than is available.

Applications for space should be made as far in advance as possible to Dr. Thomas Barbour, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass. Dr. Barbour will supply intending workers with all necessary information.

VERNON KELLOGG
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

## APPROPRIATIONS OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION BOARD

THE General Education Board has issued its annual report giving an account of its activities during the year July 1, 1926, to June 30, 1927. Previous reports have called attention to the fact that the board has decided to transfer its main interest from college to university development. At the college level the general public, alumni, local communities and denominational agencies must mainly deal with the financial situation. The same can not be said of research and teaching at the research level. Men are relatively few; facilities are relatively undeveloped; public interest is still to be aroused.

In the field of science, exclusive of medical education, appropriations have been made as follows:

### *California Institute of Technology*

The General Education Board has already cooperated with the California Institute of Technology in the development of its facilities for advanced work in physics, chemistry and mathematics. The authorities now plan further extensions in mathematical physics, biophysics and organic chemistry, and around these strengthened departments they hope to develop geology and biology, the former already established two years ago. The entire program, as now outlined, calls for additional endowment to the extent of $4,000,000. In view, however, of the difficulty of procuring personnel, the program has been divided into two parts, and the institute is now undertaking to raise $2,100,000. Towards this sum, the General Education Board appropriated $1,050,000.

### *Harvard University*

Harvard University, long eminent in respect to its personnel in the physical, biological and mathematical sciences, has only recently begun to procure adequate facilities for graduate studies. A new laboratory for chemistry is now in process of construction; the biological laboratories and collections, now scattered, need to be brought together in as close proximity as possible to other sciences. It is proposed at this time to procure funds which will enable the university to devote the Jefferson Laboratory to undergraduate work and to construct and equip a fireproof building to be used for research and graduate instruction. To accomplish this improvement in the department of physics, the sum of $1,100,000 is required. Towards this total, the General Education Board appropriated $400,000.

### *University of Chicago*

At the time of its foundation, the University of Chicago occupied an advanced position in respect to the physical and biological sciences. It is still eminent; but its accommodations remain practically what they were thirty years ago. With the exception of zoology, none of the physical and biological sciences possesses adequate space and equipment for research and the training of advanced students. The university has now undertaken to raise $2,790,000, to be apportioned approximately as follows: botany, $250,000; mathematics, physics and astronomy, $1,600,000; chemistry, $940,000.

Towards the total sum thus required, the General Education Board appropriated $1,500,000.

### *Vanderbilt University*

A few years ago Vanderbilt University established a school of medicine with ideals as exacting as those elsewhere in the country. This step rendered imperative an effort to lift the entire institution to a corresponding level. To achieve this end, an initial campaign was planned, calling for the sum of $4,100,000 in three distinct portions—$1,300,000 to be devoted to improving facilities in science, $1,300,000 for improvement of work in the humanities and social sciences, $1,500,000 for general endowment, the income to be utilized mainly in graduate work.

The first step has already been taken, and pledges amounting to the requisite sum have been secured. Towards the second and third steps the General Education Board has appropriated $900,000.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION

THE ninth annual meetings of the American Geophysical Union and of its sections will be held in Washington on April 26 and 27. A joint meeting of the sections of meteorology and oceanography will be held on both the morning and afternoon of April 26 and will be devoted to a symposium and discussion on interrelations between the sea and the atmosphere and the effect of these relations on weather and climate;