

## OBITUARY

## FREDERICK SLATE

FREDERICK SLATE, professor of physics emeritus, University of California, died at his home in Berkeley on February 26, at the age of seventy-eight years. He was born in London and came to the United States when twelve years of age. He took his bachelor's degree in 1871 at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, after which he accepted a position as civil engineer with the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. He entered the University of California as a graduate student in 1873, becoming graduate assistant in chemistry in 1875 and instructor in chemistry in 1876. After two years of study in Germany, he returned to the University of California in 1879 as superintendent of the physics laboratory. On the death of Professor John LeConte in 1891 he became head of the department of physics, which position he held until his retirement in 1918. The University of California conferred on him the degree of LL.D. in 1925.

Professor Slate was active in gaining recognition for scientific courses in the university curriculum and the establishment of a College of Natural Science. He was dean of this college from 1896 to 1909. He took an active part, not only in the early development of the university, but also in the establishment and early growth of the high school system throughout the state. His influence was always on the side of solid foundations and high standards. His publications were mainly in the field of mechanics. In the classroom he possessed to an unusual degree the power of clear exposition and the ability to inspire his students with the spirit of work. His teaching was marked by strong individuality and by the demand for exactness in thought and expression. He was a potent inspiration to many. He was a man of great sincerity, truthfulness and loyalty.

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## CHRISTINE LADD-FRANKLIN

THE career of Dr. Christine Ladd-Franklin, who died on March 5, 1930, at the age of eighty-two years, was remarkable in several ways. It was remarkable for brilliancy of achievement. Her theory of color vision, whether or not it shall be the final word on the subject, has certainly done excellent service by holding together the most important facts, and by relating psychology, physiology and photochemistry, along with an evolutionary conception of the development of the color sense. This theory arose out of her study of the theories of Helmholtz and Hering during her work in Germany in 1891-92. She pointed out defects in each of these rival theories and showed how the merits of each could be combined into a

single theory. Her work in symbolic logic, perhaps even more brilliant than that in color theory, dates from even further back, from her early days at the Johns Hopkins in 1878-82. Besides these major achievements there were several others of interest, especially her discovery with König in 1895 of the "normal night-blindness of the fovea," and her resuscitation of the "blue arcs" in 1926, and making something of theoretical interest out of this phenomenon.

One of the most remarkable features of her career was her vitality to the last. Her output of publications, which declined from the time when she was about fifty-five, mounted again when she was seventy-five. She maintained to the last her keen interest in all the new developments in her chosen lines. Little of importance escaped her notice, and her judgment and keen power of criticism remained as good as ever. Nor was there any diminution in her zeal for promoting the views which she had espoused.

One should not omit to mention the strong feminist element in her motivation. She was proud of having been a pioneer in university study by women at a time when special private arrangements had to be made in order to allow her the privilege of a university connection, and she was keenly interested in every fresh advance made by women in scientific production. To those who saw her at close range, with her keen logical mind and her cheerful aggressiveness, she certainly appeared a remarkable woman.

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## RECENT DEATHS

PROFESSOR STEPHEN A. FORBES, since 1917 chief of the Illinois State Natural History Survey, professor at the University of Illinois from 1884 to 1921, and dean of the college of science from 1888 to 1905, died on March 13 after a week's illness, at the age of eighty-five years. He had been continuously in the state's service for nearly sixty years.

THE death is reported of Dr. Thomas Rakestraw Baker, professor emeritus of natural science at Rollins College, Florida. He was ninety-three years old.

DR. HENRY CHAPMAN MERCER, anthropologist, archaeologist, historian and founder of the Mercer Museum at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, connected with the Bucks County Historical Society, died on March 9 at the age of seventy-four years.

*Nature* reports the following deaths: Dr. G. G. Chisholm, formerly reader in geography in the University of Edinburgh and secretary of the Royal