in strategic centers in the United States and Canada are now designated as Science Service minute men in archeology and anthropology under this plan.

Two investigations under the plan have already been made. Drs. Alfred S. Romer and Wilton M. Krogman, of the University of Chicago, and Russel T. Neville, of Kewaunee, Illinois, visited a cave in Leasburg, Missouri, where human remains were reported to be found and they determined that the bones were those of bears. When a report of the discovery of "prehistoric giants in West Virginia" gained wide currency, D. T. Stewart, of the U. S. National Museum, visited the site of the bone discoveries near Morgansville, West Virginia, and found that the bones were probably those of normal-sized Indians. In cooperation with Professor Ernest R. Sutton, of Salem College, he excavated further in the mounds and inspired local amateur archeologists to more effective research in a territory which is largely an archeological no-man's-land.

In addition to the news reports of the investigations which will find publication in newspapers and magazines through the usual channels of Science Service, more detailed announcements of these researches will be prepared and sent upon request to those who express an interest.

WATSON DAVIS

SCIENCE SERVICE

TWO UNUSUAL FLOCKS OF SWANS

IN recent years the appearance of the whistling swan, *Cygnus columbianus* (Ord), in large numbers is so unusual an event that the occurrence of a flock of fifty is a matter of note among ornithologists. Forbush,[1] in reference to this bird states, "In New England we rarely see or hear them now. Once they were abundant in migration along our coasts and many a lake. . . . Now the few that pass over or through our territory fly so high that they are rarely noticed, or they keep well out on wide water during daylight." Barrows, in his "Michigan Bird Life," says, "Single birds or small squads occasionally alight during bad weather in ponds and streams in various parts of the state," and quoting Butler,[2] " 'Formerly when these birds were more abundant they migrated in flocks of twenty or thirty, and sometimes as many as fifty high in the air.' " In Wisconsin, Schorger has just issued a report on the birds of Dane County. The territory covered by the report includes a number of lakes which are much frequented by waterfowl during the season of migration. The observations recorded extend over a period of twenty years, but swans were seen in only three of these, and on only seven different occasions. The largest flock observed contained forty individuals; the others less than eight each.

All the authorities cited lay special emphasis on the rarity of the bird. The appearance this spring of a large number of swans on Lake Winnebago seems therefore to merit notice.

About the first of April swans were reported to be at the northwest extremity of the lake, near Neenah. The writer visited the locality on April 5. The birds were shy and remained well off shore, but a count was possible through glasses. The number of individuals was ascertained to be two hundred.

On the same day a larger flock was reported from a location twelve miles south near Oshkosh. On April 7, after photographing the Neenah flock, which had apparently diminished little if at all in numbers, the writer drove to the Oshkosh shore. The flock here was stretched out in a great band approximately a mile in length and more or less paralleling the shore line. So close in was this band that the red beaks of the younger birds showed prominently and even the yellow spots on the beaks of older birds could be distinctly seen through six-power glasses. The individual birds were counted and found to number one thousand and seven.

A third flock, of small size, was reported to be at the southern end of the lake but this report has not, up to date, been verified. We have, however, knowledge of approximately twelve hundred swans on the lake at one time.

Accounts obtained from residents along the lake shores varied so widely that it was out of the question to determine just when and in what numbers the birds had arrived. But it is certain that these flocks are not remaining intact in their migratory movements. The smaller group in disappearing during the night of April 8 left three of its number on the lake. The larger flock shrank to one hundred and seventeen individuals between the eighth and noon on the tenth. All afternoon, on the latter date, swans in groups of from three to seven individuals left the feeding grounds until at evening only sixty remained. Three days later these sixty stragglers were still on the lake.

NELL A. ROGERS

APPLETON, WISCONSIN

[1] Edward Howe Forbush, "Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States," p. 304.

[2] Amos W. Butler, "Notes on Indiana Birds," *Proc. Ind. Acad. Sci.*, 1891.

CURIOSITIES OF SCIENTIFIC NAMES

I AM very much interested in Dr. Howard's notes, page 330 of SCIENCE for October 4, entitled "Odd Stories about Scientific Names." Some enterprising scientist could compile a book full of such stories and

it would make good reading. Is it not an error to perpetuate errors in scientific names? Only yesterday my attention was called to the following: A deer was found in Big Pine Key in South Florida different from the common deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Barbour and Allen gave it the subspecific name *clavium,* meaning "of the Keys." Unless my Latin is very much at fault, this word refers to the kind of keys that you lock doors with, and is no way related to the word quay, cay or key—terms applied to little islands on the Florida coast and in the West Indies. The word "keyensis" or "cayensis" should be used.

There are many like the following.

Our Fiddle-wood belongs to the genus Citharexylon, which means fiddle or violin wood. The woods of this genus are usually extremely heavy and hard and probably have never been used in the manufacture of fiddles. The word fiddle in this instance is probably a corruption of the French word *fidèle,* meaning strong, true and trustworthy.

We should be all the more careful because errors in nomenclature seem to stick forever, as in the word Cocopalm. Many books still insist that coco comes from *kokkos,* the Greek for seed, and there is apparently no reason for it except the superficial similarity of the words. When L. named the genus Cocos he probably had the word coccus in his mind.

The serious business of naming persons and places is even more haphazard. A colored woman in Key West liked the name "Dora," but it was too common in her neighborhood. A naval officer for whom she worked suggested "Cuspidora" in a joke. The child was so christened and is probably the only person in all the world with such a name. No doubt many plant and animal scientific names have a similar basis.

JOHN C. GIFFORD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE ADVANCEMENT OF GEOLOGY THROUGH COOPERATIVE RESEARCH

BECAUSE it has become evident that the advancement of the geological sciences requires the cooperation of a number of highly trained specialists, a geological expedition is now being organized to make a comprehensive study of the exceedingly interesting region just north and east of Yellowstone National Park. According to the plans formulated federal and state agencies, universities, research organizations and individual scientists will cooperate in the threefold plan of training students, conducting scientific research and studying mineral deposits which may be found to have commercial value.

Work planned for the present summer includes airplane and topographic mapping by the War Department and U. S. Geological Survey, and geological field work by the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology and the U. S. Geological Survey; and during 1931 gravity studies will be made in the region by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in an effort to compare and harmonize geological and geodetic evidence afforded by the area.

Preliminary studies of the geography, land forms and glacial geology of the Beartooth Plateau and adjacent lowlands will be made jointly by Professor Nevin M. Fenneman, of the University of Cincinnati and National Research Council; by Professor Paul McClintock, of Princeton and the Illinois State Geological Survey, and probably by Dr. Arthur Bevan, who was formerly at the University of Illinois, is now state geologist of Virginia and did his thesis work for the University of Chicago on the physiography of the Beartooth region.

Study of the Cambrian geology of the region, which is a continuation of the work of the late Dr. Charles D. Walcott, of the Smithsonian Institution, will be directed by an informal committee consisting of Dr. C. E. Resser, of the U. S. National Museum; Dr. Ira Edwards, of the Milwaukee Museum, and Professor B. F. Howell, of Princeton. Work on special details of local Cambrian geology is to be done by Gordon Knox Bell, Jr., of New York City, a graduate of Harvard and at present a graduate student at Columbia University.

Work on the chromite deposits and other ore deposits of the Beartooth region, and on the intrusive and volcanic rocks of the area, will be planned by a group including Dr. C. H. Clapp, president of the University of Montana; Dr. Francis A. Thomson, president of the Montana School of Mines and director of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology; Professor A. F. Buddington, and Professor Edward Sampson, of Princeton. Special phases of the petrologic work will be taken up by Dr. E. L. Perry, of Williams College.

The underground water resources of the Montana portion of the area will be studied by Dr. Eugene S. Perry, of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, assisted by students from the Montana State School of Mines; and the coal and oil geology of the region will be studied in a broad way by Dr. C. E. Dobbin, of the U. S. Geological Survey; and by Dr. W. T. Thom, Jr., of Princeton, who is a participant in the research work of the American Petroleum Institute