SOCIETIES AND MEETINGS

THE ILLINOIS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

THE Illinois Academy of Science held its twenty-third annual meeting at the University of Illinois at Urbana on May 2 and 3, 1930. The meeting was held in conjunction with the quarter-centennial celebration of the Illinois State Geological Survey, and was the best attended in the history of the organization. Over 600 were present at the various sectional meetings. As the result of an intensive membership campaign, about 250 new members were added, bringing the total membership to nearly 1,000. These new memberships include 23 new high-school science clubs which have become affiliated with the state organization.

At the business sessions of the academy a decision was reached to create a Hall of Fame for Illinois scientists. The committee selected to take charge of this project includes five members, all of whom are past presidents of the academy: Dr. M. M. Leighton, chief of the State Geological Survey, *chairman;* Dr. William A. Noyes, professor emeritus of chemistry, University of Illinois; Dr. H. J. Van Cleave, professor of zoology, University of Illinois; Dr. Henry C. Cowles, chairman of the department of botany, University of Chicago, and Dr. U. S. Grant, chairman of the department of geology, Northwestern University.

Other officers and committees elected to serve for 1930–1931 are as follows:

President, Fred R. Jelliff, the *Daily Register-Mail,* Galesburg.

First vice-president, William P. Hayes, University of Illinois.

Second vice-president, Arthur L. Epstein, Peoria.

Secretary, F. M. Fryxell, Augustana College.

Treasurer, George D. Fuller, University of Chicago.

Librarian, A. R. Crook, State Museum, Springfield.

Delegate to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, A. C. Walton, Knox College.

Delegates to the Conservation Council of Chicago, W. G. Waterman, Northwestern University, Evanston; V. O. Graham, University of Chicago.

F. M. FRYXELL,
Secretary

SCIENTIFIC APPARATUS AND LABORATORY METHODS

A RAPID METHOD FOR STAINING SECTIONS OF THE SPINAL CORD AND BRAIN-STEM

SECTIONS used for class teaching of the central nervous system are commonly prepared by rather elaborate and time-consuming technique, even so-called rapid methods being relatively complicated.

In searching for a substitute to supply each student with a complete series to assure him a chance to examine every important feature, the writer found an exceptionally quick method of procedure, with the added advantage over the more complicated techniques that it furnishes a remarkably ready and direct correlation between gross and microscopic structure, and makes complete series unnecessary, though of course these are not superseded entirely.

Using this method students can select pieces of the cord or brain-stem which have been hardened a few days or longer, or which come from the cadaver, and cut through any desired region with a safety razor blade, to show in a few minutes the microscopic details of the parts cut. Thus one secures the readiest comparison and understanding of the buried microscopic structures and connections forming the basis of surface relief. This is one of the difficult problems of beginners, and it is most helpful for them to be able to repeat such studies, at will, through different levels.

Naturally the material of a dissecting room varies, and the sharpest pictures will come from the best fixed bodies; but there are advantages in having pathological conditions shown in some sections. It is also valuable to be able to demonstrate the results of specific lesions, as ascending or descending degeneration of various tracts, in subjects which have been examined for other correlated pathology.

To lay open, at will, and demonstrate quickly the finer internal relations of nuclei and connections of any cranial nerve or other special structure of the medulla prominent in surface views is a helpful preliminary to later more detailed study by other methods.

The method can be also used in testing conclusions gathered from symptoms and autopsy, without loss of time and sacrifice of material, since it marks out degenerate posterior funiculi or crossed and direct cerebrospinal tracts or other pathological features. I have not investigated this phase extensively beyond making tests of the practicability of such diagnosis. For the opportunity of making these tests on cords with known histories I have to thank Dr. N. W. Winkleman, of the department of neurology in the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania.

The method here outlined is an adaptation of the "Rapid Iron Hematoxylin Technique" which was published by Dr. E. C. Cole, of Williams College, in