

Californian societies did not engross his whole attention. He was a member of the Wilson Ornithological Club, the Biological Society of Washington and the American Society of Mammalogists, and fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Ornithologists' Union. He was present at meetings of the Union whenever possible, and was ever closely in touch with A. O. U. concerns. The "Ten Year Index to the Auk (1921-1930)" made its successful appearance in 1934, largely due to Mr. Swarth's painstaking editing.

In 1927 Mr. Swarth became curator of the Department of Ornithology and Mammalogy of the California Academy of Sciences, a position he held until his death. On going to the academy, he immediately gave his attention to the study of the institution's collection of Galapagos birds, and during the next few years he was occupied here and in Europe studying the problems presented by these birds. His solutions are to be found in his "Avifauna of the Galapagos Islands."

The work he had done on Galapagos material and the knowledge of the islands he acquired during a visit he paid there in 1932 on Mr. Templeton Crocker's yacht *Zaca* gave him an appreciation of the importance of protecting the various forms of animal and plant life found there. After some fruitless correspondence he finally got into communication with Robert T. Moore, of Los Angeles, whose knowledge of Ecuador and its people placed him in a position to bring to a successful conclusion the efforts for legislation to provide adequate protection for the fauna of the islands.

Mr. Swarth's labors in ornithology and mammalogy failed to crowd out his human interests. His knowledge of music and art and literature and his quiet humor made him a delightful conversationalist. He was slow in making new friends, but his sincerity and kindness, his fairness and dependability won him the warm regard of all who knew him.

M. E. DAVIDSON

#### RECENT DEATHS

DR. LAFAYETTE B. MENDEL, Sterling professor of physiological chemistry at Yale University, died on

December 9 in his sixty-fourth year. Mrs. Mendel died less than a month ago.

WALTER BUTLER HARRIS, professor emeritus of geodesy in the engineering faculty of Princeton University, died on November 21 at the age of seventy years.

DR. CHARLES RICHEL, the physiologist, professor of medicine in the University of Paris, a member of the French Academy of Medicine and the Paris Academy of Sciences, died on December 3 at the age of eighty-five years. Dr. Richet was awarded in 1913 the Nobel prize in physiology and medicine.

THE death is announced of Professor Etienne, of Nancy, known for his studies in neurology, with special reference to poliomyelitis.

#### MEMORIALS

Two stone lanterns, symbolizing the Japanese conception of "eternal light," were presented to the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation on December 2 on behalf of the Electrical Association of Japan. The presentation was made by Renzo Sawada, Japanese Consul General, at the Edison Library and Laboratory in West Orange, N. J. The lanterns are more than six feet high and weigh more than 4,300 pounds each. They will remain in the custody of the foundation and will be set up temporarily in the museum adjoining the library.

PLANS are being made at Greenock, Scotland, for the celebration in January of the bicentenary of the birth of James Watt. The Watt anniversary lecture will be delivered on January 17 by Lord Rutherford and a memorial service will be held in the Town Hall on January 19, the date of Watt's birth. The schools will present a Watt pageant, and a memorial plaque will be unveiled in the Watt School of Engineering and Navigation, which stands on the site of the house where Watt was born.

THREE streets in Paris have been recently named, respectively, after M. Grancher, late professor of pediatrics in the University of Paris; M. Dejerine, the successor of Charcot, and M. Emile Roux, the former director of the Institut Pasteur.

### SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

#### SUBSTITUTION OF THE PRACTICAL ABSOLUTE SYSTEM OF ELECTRICAL UNITS FOR THE EXISTING INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM<sup>1</sup>

IN accordance with the authority and responsibility placed upon it by the General Conference of Weights

and Measures in 1933, the International Committee of Weights and Measures has decided that the actual substitution of the absolute system of electrical units for the international system shall take place on January 1, 1940.

In collaboration with the national physical laboratories, the committee is actively engaged in establishing the ratios between the international units and the corresponding practical absolute units.

<sup>1</sup> Approved by the International Committee of Weights and Measures at its meeting in October, 1935, at Sèvres, France.