

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

THE distinguished service medal for scientific achievement of the American Medical Association was presented at the opening general meeting at Cleveland on June 4 to Dr. James Ewing, an authority on cancer, formerly director of the laboratories of Memorial Hospital, New York City.

THE Arthur Hoyt Scott horticultural award of Swarthmore College, consisting of a medal and \$1,000, has been given to Dr. C. Stuart Gager, director of the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. The award was made in recognition of "achievement of great merit and recognition of outstanding work in creating and developing a wider interest in gardening." Swarthmore College is the custodian of the funds of this endowment, and the president of the college acts as chairman of a committee of nine that makes the award. The committee includes representatives of various horticultural organizations.

DR. ELMER D. MERRILL, administrator of botanical collections and director of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, has been elected an honorary member of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India.

THE Stevens Institute of Technology on June 7 conferred the degree of doctor of science on Dr. Percy Williams Bridgman, Hollis professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Harvard University.

DR. OTHMAR HERMAN AMMANN, formerly chief engineer of the Port of New York Authority, received on June 3 the honorary degree of doctor of science at the commencement exercises of Columbia University. The citation reads: "Formerly chief engineer of the Port of New York Authority; graduated at the Swiss Federal Polytechnic Institute of Zurich, receiving there the traditionally sound and thorough scientific training of the land of his birth; who has now established a commanding reputation among bridge engineers through his leading part in planning and in building the great bridges which unite Manhattan Island with its neighbors."

THE doctorate of science was conferred on June 2 at the commencement exercises of Syracuse University on Dr. Elmer Grimshaw Butler, professor of biology and chairman of the department at Princeton University; and on Alger Luman Ward, manager of the chemical laboratories of the United Gas Improvement Company, Philadelphia.

THE degree of doctor of laws was conferred on June 1 by the New Jersey College for Women, Rutgers University, on Dr. Margaret Mead, assistant curator of ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History, who gave the commencement address.

MRS. CECILIA PAYNE GAPOSCHKIN, astronomer at the Harvard College Observatory, received on May 10 the degree of doctor of science at the seventy-first annual commencement exercises of Wilson College, Chambersburg, Pa.

At the forty-eighth annual commencement exercises on June 4 of the New Jersey College of Pharmacy, a division of Rutgers University, the doctorate of science was conferred on Rudolf Edward Gruber, of Colonia, N. J., vice-president of Merek and Company.

DR. DONALD PRICE, technical director of the Organic Research Laboratory of National Oil Products Company, Harrison, N. J., has been elected chairman of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Chemists. He succeeds Dr. William Howlett Gardner, of the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn.

DR. RALPH H. MÜLLER, professor of chemistry at New York University, was elected chairman of the New York Section of the American Chemical Society at the annual meeting of the section on May 9. He succeeds Robert Calvert, consulting chemist and chemical patent attorney. Dr. Charles N. Frey, Fleischmann Laboratories, New York, was named chairman-elect.

THE Case Chapter of the Society of Sigma Xi held its annual initiation on the evening of May 29. Twenty-nine students were elected to full membership. Officers elected for the next year were: *President*, Professor Paul L. Hoover; *Vice-president*, Professor Kenneth H. Donaldson; *Treasurer*, Professor T. M. Focke; *Secretary*, Professor Richard S. Burington. Following the ceremonies at which Professor Robert S. Shankland, retiring president, presided, Professor Bart J. Bok, of Harvard University, spoke on "In Between the Stars."

At the anniversary meeting of the members of the Royal Institution, London, held on May 1, the following officers were elected: *President*, Lord Eustace Percy; *Treasurer*, Sir Robert Robertson; *Secretary*, Major Charles E. S. Phillips.

DR. ROBIN C. BUECKI, medical superintendent of the General Hospital of the State of Wisconsin, at Madison, has been appointed dean of the Graduate School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania to succeed Dr. George H. Meeker, who will retire on October 1. In addition Dr. Buerki will fill the newly established position of director of the university hospitals.

A PROFESSORSHIP in industrial chemistry has been established at Cornell University in honor of Herbert F. Johnson, supported by S. C. Johnson and Son, In-

incorporated, Racine, Wis., of which Mr. Johnson was president. The first holder of the professorship will be Dr. Fred H. Rhodes, since 1920 professor of chemistry and chemical engineering, and since 1938 director of the School of Chemical Engineering at the university.

DR. FRANCIS J. GERTY, clinical professor and chairman of the department of neurology and psychiatry of the School of Medicine of Loyola University, Chicago, has been appointed professor and head of the department of psychiatry at the College of Medicine of the University of Illinois. He succeeds the late Dr. Harold Douglas Singer.

PROFESSOR FREDERICK SLOCUM, director of the Van Vleck Observatory and for twenty-five years a member of the faculty of Wesleyan University, has been appointed professor emeritus, effective at the close of the college year. He will continue to direct the observatory and to teach two courses during the coming academic year.

DR. D. P. CURRY, assistant chief health officer at Balboa, C. Z., an authority on tropical sanitation and mosquito control, retired on June 1, after more than twenty-two years' service in the Health Department of the Panama Canal.

HOWARD F. HOPKINS, associate regional forester of the California Region, has been appointed from June 1 chief of the Division of Private Forestry Cooperation in the Forest Service. The position has been vacant since last October, when Gerald D. Cook resigned to enter private business.

DR. THEODORE CARROLL BYERLY, professor of poultry husbandry at the University of Maryland, has been appointed senior poultry husbandman to direct poultry husbandry investigations in the Bureau of Animal Industry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. He succeeds on July 1 Berley Winton, who recently became director of the U. S. Regional Poultry Research Laboratory at East Lansing, Michigan.

THE *Journal* of the American Medical Association states that Dr. Henry R. Kraybill, since 1926 professor and head of the department of agricultural chemistry at Purdue University, has been appointed director of the department of scientific research of the American Meat Institute. He succeeds Dr. Winford Lee Lewis, who has held the position since 1924 and who has asked to be relieved because of ill health. He will be associated with the institute in an advisory capacity.

DR. G. HERTER, formerly of Montevideo, known for his work on the flora of Uruguay, has been appointed director of the Botanical Institute of Cracow, Poland.

THE fourth group of scientific men representing the National Research Committee left for London on June 7 to gather scientific data relating to national defense. The party consisted of Dr. George B. Kistiakowsky, professor of physical chemistry at Harvard University; Dr. W. A. Noyes, Jr., professor of physical chemistry at the University of Rochester, and Dr. Robert C. Elderfield, professor of organic chemistry at Columbia University. Dr. Norman F. Ramsey, associate in physics at the University of Illinois, left on June 10 to join the group in London.

DR. CASSIUS W. CURTIS, assistant professor of physics at Western Reserve University, will be for the next four months engaged in research in physics for national defense purposes at Princeton University under the auspices of the National Defense Research Council. The council has an experimental station at Princeton, and has called together a group of physicists for the investigation of a special problem, the nature of which has not been made public. Other men in the group who have leave of absence and who are taking part in the investigation are Professor H. P. Robertson and Professor Walker Bleakney, of the university; Professor T. A. Beth, of Michigan State College, and Assistant Professor C. W. Lampson, of the University of Richmond.

DR. OMAR C. HELD, of the Naval Reserve, associate professor of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, and personnel assistant to the dean of the college, has been called to active duty with a neuropsychiatric unit in connection with the Naval Operating Base at Norfolk, Va.

THE State Department has awarded a travel grant to Dr. Henry K. Beecher, of the Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts General Hospital, to give a series of lectures during June and July at the National University of Colombia at Bogota.

DR. CARL V. WELLER, professor of pathology of the Medical School of the University of Michigan, delivered on May 8 the twenty-fourth annual Mellon Lecture sponsored by the Society for Biological Research of the University of Pittsburgh. His subject was "The Inheritance of Retinoblastoma and Its Relationship to Practical Eugenics."

DR. CHARLES D. SNYDER, of the School of Medicine of the Johns Hopkins University, gave on May 15 an address before the annual meeting in New York of the National Gastroenterological Association on "Recent Advances in the Physiology of the Liver and their Challenge to the Experimental Physiologist."

RECENT lectures under the auspices of the department of geology and geography at Northwestern Uni-

versity are: Professor Nevin M. Fenneman, of the University of Cincinnati, "Desert Forms and Desert Processes"; Dr. Harrison Schmitt, consulting geologist, "The Training of the Mining Geologist"; Professor H. E. McKinstry, of the University of Wisconsin, "Structural Control in Certain Australian Gold Districts"; Professor E. S. Bastin, of the University of Chicago, "Silver Ores as Illustrations of Problems of the Mining Geologist"; Theron Wasson, chief geologist, Pure Oil Company, "Petroleum Prospecting Methods in Latin America"; Dr. Sherwin F. Kelly, consulting geophysicist, "Magnetic and Electrical Technique in the Mining and Petroleum Fields"; and Dr. H. K. Gloyd, director of the Chicago Academy of Science, "Desert Ecology."

Nature states that in a written reply to a Parliamentary question on April 29, Mr. Butler, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, said: "After consultation with the appropriate authorities in the United States, His Majesty's Government have drawn up a comprehensive scheme, which has already been put into operation, for cooperation in scientific matters with the

United States of America. His Majesty's Government have selected and sent Dr. Darwin, the director of the National Physical Laboratory, as director of a Central Scientific Office, working under the direction of the British Supply Council in North America. Dr. Darwin's duty will be to collaborate with United States research bodies, to act as a channel for the exchange with the appropriate United States authorities of technical and scientific information, and generally to coordinate scientific and technical inquiries to and from the United States authorities, except in those matters which are already dealt with through the Service attachés. In addition, Dr. Conant, the president of Harvard University, recently visited England as President Roosevelt's representative in order to establish a corresponding mission in this country."

Dr. C. A. WEATHERBY writes to the *American Fern Journal* calling attention to the publication of a new periodical entitled *Natura* published in Japanese and Portuguese by the Kanihara Institute of Natural Science of Brazil at São Paulo. The first installment of a "Flora Nippo-Brasiliensis" appears in this issue.

DISCUSSION

ORIENTAL RAT FLEA ESTABLISHED IN KANSAS

THE occurrence of the oriental rat flea, *Xenopsylla cheopis* (Roth.),¹ in Kansas was reported at the 1941 meeting of the Kansas Academy of Science.² This report was based upon 20 fleas from eight rats, *Rattus n. norvegicus* (Erxleben), taken in September, 1940, at the Manhattan city dumping ground. Whether or not fleas of this species could overwinter at Manhattan was problematical, as there have been but few instances in which these fleas have been reported in both the fall and the spring from the same location in the interior of the United States. To test the ability of *X. cheopis* to overwinter at Manhattan, Kansas, another group of adult rats was taken on April 24, 1941, at the city dumping ground. Each of the four rats obtained was infested with from two to eight fleas. On examination, all the fleas were found to be *Xenopsylla cheopis* (Roth.), thus indicating that the oriental rat flea can overwinter at Manhattan, Kansas, and that it is established here.

While *Xenopsylla cheopis* figured in the losses of millions of human lives from bubonic and other types of plague during the period from the sixth to the nineteenth centuries, its greatest importance in the interior of the United States is probably in connection with sylvatic plague, a type that occurs mostly in wild

rodents. In recent years, several fatal human cases have been reported. According to Eskey and Haas,³ sylvatic plague is spreading eastward from western United States. Since 1900, when it was first discovered in the United States at the port of San Francisco, sylvatic plague has been reported from the following interior states: Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. These reports include territory east of the Great Divide in New Mexico and Wyoming. That the oriental rat flea, which has been present in coastal cities since 1900, is spreading into the interior has been shown by a number of reports. Trembley and Bishopp⁴ listed the following interior states from which *Xenopsyllus cheopis* has been reported: Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio and Tennessee. The presence of the oriental rat flea in these states and in Kansas, as here reported, and the eastward movement of sylvatic plague, a fatal human disease, make it evident that steps should be taken to control this important pest. While ground squirrels, mice and cottontail rabbits may harbor *Xenopsyllus cheopis*, the principal hosts of this flea are species of rats of which the common gray rat, *Rattus n. norvegicus* (Erxleben), is the most important.⁵ These animals are also susceptible to the plague organism,

³ C. R. Eskey and V. H. Haas, *Public Health Rpt.* 54: 1467-1481, 1937.

⁴ Helen Louise Trembley and F. C. Bishopp, *Jour. Econ. Ent.*, 33(4): 701-703, August, 1940.

⁵ W. B. Herms, "Medical Entomology," 3rd ed., New York: Macmillan, 1939.

¹ Identification confirmed by Dr. H. E. Ewing, Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Washington, D. C.

² A. W. Grundmann, H. P. Boles and J. E. Ackert, *Trans. Kans. Acad. Sci.*, Vol. 44 (in press).